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classic shoes

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北京青年报
BEIJING YOUTH DAILY



Ready for the
recycle bin

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Steel roads of
the past

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Help for Haiti



CFP Photo

Much of Port-au-Prince, Haiti's capital, was reduced to rubble by the 7.3-magnitude quake on Tuesday. However, its airport remains operational, leaving a crucial door open to aid.

China, the victim of its own catastrophic earthquake in early 2008, stepped up Wednesday evening to send its experienced relief teams with 10 tons of supplies and food to the island nation.

Though the countries share no diplomatic relations, the relief team hopes to assist in saving those who lie buried before time runs out. Many governments and aid agencies are participating in this massive relief operation.

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CHINESE RESTAURANT

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Gov sends aid, rescue to Haiti

Haitian leaders yesterday said that there was no estimate on how many people were killed by Tuesday's magnitude-7.3 earthquake that rocked the impoverished Caribbean nation but said that 500,000 people may have died.

China and other countries mobilized a vast rescue and relief effort to assist the legions of desperate survivors.

The government sent an emergency rescue team Wednesday evening to Haiti, which suffered its strongest quake in 200 years. The island has no diplomatic relations with China.

The International Red Cross estimated Thursday that 3 million people – a third of the population – may need emergency relief.

President Hu Jintao and Premier Wen Jiabao called on government departments and rescue groups to unearth the buried, to protect Chinese nationals in Haiti and to provide humanitarian aid.

China's Red Cross Society pledged 6.8 million yuan in emergency aid to the country.

The quake struck at 4:53 pm Wednesday and its epicenter was under the sea, 15 kilometers southwest of Port-au-Prince, Haiti's capital and

home to 4 million.

Power supplies were cut off and communications were interrupted as many buildings, including hospitals and the presidential compound, were damaged.

Eight of the 125 Chinese peacekeepers deployed there last June were buried under debris, according to a statement from the State Council.

UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon said Wednesday that 16 UN staffers were confirmed dead.

A "massive number" of people of the United Nations mission, including the 9,000-strong multi-national peacekeeping mission, are still missing, said a UN official who declined to be named.

The newly dispatched Chinese rescue team includes search and rescue personnel, doctors and three sniffer dogs. They will take 10 tons of food, equipment and medicine.

"We didn't take more because there was no time, no space and Haiti is very far," Hou Shike, head of the medical group, said.

The Center for Consular Assistance and Protection under China's Foreign Ministry has opened its 24-hour consultation service.



The rescue team hopes to save buried Chinese peacekeepers. IC Photo

Netizens took to the Internet to pray and express their condolence to the Haitian people on the other side of the globe.

"We are together, We are family," read one of the more than 8,000 comments posted on Sina.com.

(Agencies)

Holiday trains to require ID

By Han Manman

Railway authorities are preparing for a real-name ticket system to end scalping during the upcoming Spring Festival rush. Although many have called for such a system for years, there are still doubts about its feasibility.

The Ministry of Railways said holiday passengers will be required to show their ID card when buying a train ticket at any of 37 rail stations in Guangdong, Sichuan, Hunan and Guizhou provinces. There will only be one ticket issued per ID.

Beijing has so far not been included in the new system, but passengers must flash their ID in Beijing stations if they book or buy return tickets from those 37 stations.

The system will take effect during the Spring Festival peak, from January 30 to March 30. Spring Festival falls on February 14 this year.

The perennial problem of difficult-to-purchase tickets may be solved by this system, said Liu Junhai, director of the Commercial Law Research Institute at Renmin University.

"The difficulty of securing a ticket is a yearly hardship for many who work far from home. The scalpers always buy tickets in mass to sell at inflated prices," Liu said.

"It's too hard to buy a train ticket during the peak. I've been working in Beijing for four years. Each Spring Festival, I end up having to pay a scalper double or triple the price of the ticket to get



Many worry the new measures may stall ticket sales. CFP Photo

home, and there is always a risk of getting a fake ticket," said Li Degang, a migrant worker from Sichuan. "I have to get home to see my family. I have to take that risk."

Liu said the new measures may also increase safety aboard trains and make it possible to track criminals on the run.

Nearly 80 percent of respondents said the new system would help stop scalping and make tickets more accessible during the holiday, according to an online survey by Sohu.com, a major Internet portal.

Although many support the new system, it may be difficult to enforce. Some said the extra checks will slow down ticket sales making already long lines even longer.

Possible delays at the train station might also pose a security problem, a railway official said at a press conference late last year.

It may also be difficult to quickly

weed out fake ID cards and other forged documents.

A statement by the Ministry of Railways said that in addition to ID cards, other identification documents such as diplomat certificates, passport and consulate certificates may be used when buying a ticket.

Few such certificates can be checked online, which may make it difficult for ticket sellers to verify authenticity.

The Spring Festival has long suffered from train shortages. Millions of migrant workers return home for the holidays: for many, it is the only chance to see their family all year.

The National Development and Reform Commission forecast 210 million train trips over the holiday period, meaning there will be 9.5 percent more trains leaving the stations than there were in 2009.

E-government falls short of expectations

By Zhao Hongyi

A recent third-party evaluation of government websites found that while nearly all government departments have opened websites as required, few offer any of the useful information they were expected to provide.

The 2009 evaluation, published Tuesday, was conducted by People's Daily Online. The survey was the first of its kind to draw on netizen opinion.

The evaluation praised several websites, including that of the Ministry of Commerce. It said the ministry used its website effectively to communicate with netizens and conducted online interviews with commercial counselors and directors of commerce in every province. It also used its website to collect complaint reports.

At the provincial level, the report praised the Beijing, Shanghai and Zhejiang for clearly listing their functions and the procedures of their departments, as well as for posting regular updates about their work.

But many other areas of government failed to help solve problems, Luo Hua, deputy-director of the survey, said.

Some 25 percent of the government's websites went unused by netizens, which the authors of the survey interpret as a sign of problems, Luo said.

Fewer than 50 percent of netizens said the websites had useful information and resources, Luo said.

More than half complained that it appeared the site maintainers were unwilling to provide flexible or efficient services.

This was the eighth evaluation of government websites

since 2002. While the central government made great strides in getting information online during the last year, "it needs to do more to use these evaluations as a tool to supervise and improve the performance of the websites," said Zhang Xianghong, vice president of China Center for Information Industry Development, which helped conduct the survey.

"The use of government websites is very limited," Zhang said. "Most of the websites were only put up to meet the minimal requirements of upper-level government: not to serve the public."

"In China, levels and branches are comparatively independent in the services they provide," Zhang said, explaining why many websites are so poorly coordinated.

"This doesn't work. Attempting e-government requires high efficiency and coordination," Zhang said. "It shows that our government agencies are not learning from the experiences of their colleagues abroad."

Local governments in the US are highly efficient because "they know who is boss and have a clear idea what their job is and where they fit into the grand scheme."

Zhang criticized the "independent" evaluations conducted every year. "The survey should be conducted by someone who is not in any way attached to a government body. It should be conducted by a public entity or by netizens."

Future surveys may be better. Zhang said he expected the number of netizens polled to increase from 40,000 this year to 40 million in five years.

Developers plan world's highest airport in Tibet

China is preparing to break its own record by building the world's highest airport in Tibet at 4,500 meters above sea level, Xinhua News Agency reported Tuesday.

The airport, planned in Nagqu Prefecture, would be 102 meters higher than Bamda Airport in Qamdo Prefecture. The Qamdo airport was built in 1994 and is the world's highest, said Xu Bo, director of the Tibetan Branch of the China Civil Aviation Administration.

Xu Jian, director of the Nagqu Committee of Development and Reform, said the new airport was included in Tibet's development plan though a site has not been selected.

"Construction is planned for 2011. It will take three years to complete and will cost 1.8 billion yuan," he said.

The airport would cover 233 to

266 hectares.

The airport, with an exact elevation of 4,436 meters in the Himalayas where the temperature stays below zero throughout the year, would be Tibet's sixth. It will be named Nagqu Daging Airport after the area of its expected location.

"The civil aviation network in Tibet is shaping up. The objective for the next stage of development is to open direct air routes from Tibet to South Asian countries," he said.

Nagqu, about 300 kilometers from the capital Lhasa, is in the center of the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau. The prefecture is home to 400,000.

"With the airport, Nagqu, which is also on the Qinghai-Tibet railway line, may become an economic hub in the plateau region," Tan Yongshou, commissioner of the prefecture, said.



Tibet will break its own record with a new airport at 4,500 meters. CFP Photo

The new airport is a part of a plan to boost economic growth in the region.

The Qinghai-Tibet railway, which at 5,072 meters is the world's highest, connects Tibet to

the rest of China and opened four years ago.

The government is currently constructing six new rail lines in and around the region.

(By Han Mamman)

World's first edible theme park comes to town in two weeks

By Chu Meng

The world's first chocolate wonderland of life-size edible Terracotta Warriors, a Great Wall, a riverside scene from the Qingming Festival and versions of famous paintings will open beside the Bird's Nest on January 29.

Ever seen the Terracotta Warriors in Xi'an? Couldn't help thinking the First Emperor's Mausoleum would be made so much better if you could take a bite out of each handcrafted treasure? If the answers are yes to both these questions, you may surely want to book a time at the end of this month to this Willy Wonka-style chocolate wonderland in the Olympic Green.

The theme park, reminiscent of Roald Dahl's *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*, will be 20,000 square meters. It will include a chocolate pavilion, candy pavilion, dreamland pavilion, sweet experience pavilion and sweet gift pavilion. There will also be two outdoor sites for chocolate sculpture.

"Our 'chocolate wonderland' will be beyond the imagination," said Tina Cheng, general manager of Beijing Xianglong Planning Company, the developer. The miniatures are hand crafted and breathtaking in detail. The chocolate Great Wall, for example, is 10 meters long and almost a meter wide. The chocolate wall includes passes, towers and beacon fire stations. One of its towers is complete with gates, walls, floors and steps.

"If one person ate 100 kilograms of chocolate from this Great Wall every day, it would take 180 years to eat the whole wall," Tina said. The theme park caters to the country's growing population of chocoholics and those seeking curious recreation.

Chocolate is less popular than it is in the West, though the younger generation is developing a serious sweet tooth.

"There may be a huge market for chocolate consumption in China," she said. "That's why many overseas chocolate producers and a number of prestigious chocolate makers from Europe, including Belgium and Switzerland, are vying to join our project."

But childhood nutrition experts and parents are concerned.

"My child has already seen too many TV commercials and dazzling candy wrappers at the store. They are all high-sugar, high-oil, low-nutrition snacks. I am worried this theme park may take my daughter's infatuation with sugar and chocolate to a new level," said Meng Xiaodan, the mother of a three-year-old daughter and a doctor at Beijing No. 301 Hospital.



The Great Wall of chocolate is more than one can eat in a lifetime. Photo provided by Sherry

AIDS carriers host first radio program

By Huang Daoheng

The nation's first radio program about AIDS with HIV-positive hosts will begin airing tomorrow on China National Radio (CNR).

The weekly program, Positive Talks, has been called the latest sign of the government's openness toward the disease. It will be broadcast live from 9 to 10 pm Saturdays via the CNR's Business Channel.

Co-hosted by professional radio personalities and people living with HIV, the program is expected to be a unique media platform where HIV-positive people can help each other, Yang Wenyan, deputy editor-in-chief of CNR, said at the program's launch ceremony last Saturday.

Experts will be invited on the show to discuss HIV/AIDS and raise public awareness of the issue, Yang said.

The stigma and discrimination that come with the disease have been difficult to scrub away, and remain an obstacle to prevention efforts, Yang said. The program will give more "attention, care, and support" to the country's legions of HIV-infected people, he said.

Ma Binjun, who has HIV, agreed with Yang. "AIDS is not just a disease or statistic. It affects the daily life of tens of thousands of HIV carriers, their relatives and their friends," he said.

Ma said he hoped the program would deepen the public's understanding of the infected. "Encouragement and understanding will surely help HIV-infected people to live an active life," he said.

Jointly produced by CNR and the non-profit Marie Stopes International China, the program is expected to reach 300 million listeners in 60 cities across the country. Listeners can also follow the program online at Cnr.cn or Sohu.com.

The government is gradually paying more attention to the HIV/AIDS dilemma.

2007 saw the first televised ad campaign that promoted the use of condoms to prevent HIV. Last November, the Health Ministry and the United Nations launched a campaign opposing HIV discrimination with ads featuring basketball star Yao Ming. Last month, the nation's first government-approved gay bar opened in Dali, Yunnan Province.

The Ministry of Health estimated that at the end of 2009, there were 560,000 to 920,000 people infected with the HIV virus and 97,000 to 112,000 living with AIDS.

Publishers' new plan may end steep book discounts

By Zhang Dongya

Buying books used to require a special trip to the bookstore. But these days, it only takes a mouse click to have books delivered to your door at a discount.

But a new regulation titled "Regulations on Fair Trade of Books" limits discounts to no more than 15 percent off the list price, effectively castrating the online business model.

While publishers have downplayed last week's new regulation, many online retailers are saying they cannot survive. The new rules mark the first attempt by the book publishing industry to regulate prices. Despite the regulation lacking legal validity, the Publishers Association, one of its framers, said they had "many ways" to guarantee its execution.



The Regulations on Fair Trade of Books, released at the 2010 Beijing Book Fair, may end the days of the 30-percent-discount books online.

CFP Photos

Reigning in prices

On January 8, opening day of the 2010 Beijing Book Fair, the Publishers Association announced its new regulation on book sales that it framed together with the Books and Periodicals Distribution Association and the Xinhua Bookstore Association.

The regulation, divided into nine chapters and 30 items, contains articles governing book orders, supplies, returns and promotions.

The article on promotions was the one that turned heads: under the regulations, no book may be sold at a discount of more than 15 percent during the first year following its release.

Most online bookstores sell new releases at 30 to 35 percent off the cover price.

"We have four goals: to help our co-associations become professional trade associations; to promote awareness of integrity and professional ethics; to help the General Administration of Press and Publication establish a credit system for trade; and to safeguard the book market," Huang Guorong, standing deputy secretary of the Publishers Association, said.

Huang compared the present associations to social groups rather than trade societies, which should have more muscle within their fields.



Online retailers like Dangdang say they will wait to hear the punishments before raising prices.

Publishers vs. bookstores

Huang said the Publishers Association is trying to balance the rights and interests of readers, book dealers and publishers. "Business should be conducted under standard pricing. Trade should not have to involve cut-throat competition," he said.

Some have noted that the regulation favors Xinhua Bookstore, the country's largest and oldest book dealer. The store traces its roots to 1937: in the decades since, it has grown to include 14,000 stores around the country.

"Online bookstores have had a serious impact on our business," Niu Hailong, manager of Xinhua Bookstore's information center, said.

The first online bookstores started operating in the late 1990s, quickly drawing regular shoppers away from traditional bookshops. Many offered discounts of 30 percent off the cover price plus free delivery.

Some provincial Xinhua Bookstores began selling online to compete. Xinhua Wenxuan, a Xinhua affiliate in Sichuan Province, achieved success in that model and went public in 2007.

Dangdang, the country's largest online book dealer, said Monday it would wait for the regulations to be officially published before it would comment during an interview with the Guangzhou-based *Southern Metropolis Daily*.

New releases are 30 percent off Dangdang's sales: half of these books are being sold at 15 percent

off, meaning the other half may be affected by the new regulations.

Some stores remained optimistic.

Peng Lun from 99read.com, another major online bookseller, said even a 15-percent discount still gave online stores an edge over many traditional outlets.

Huang Zhaofang, general president of Wuhan University Press Beijing Branch, said the present print market generates "little profit." "We are having to offer big discounts and we pay for the logistics-both deliveries and returns."

Print houses usually offer bookstores between 50 to 60 percent off the cover price. For A-level stores, such as Xinhua, which buy large quantities and have good credit, publishers offer better prices. But private or small stores are considered riskier clients.

Generally, textbooks are sold at 68 to 70 percent off because they are a guaranteed sell. Other popular books are sold at 58 to 60 percent off.

Jeff Zhu, sales and marketing executive of the Hong Kong-based Pan Macmillan Asia, said the discounts it offers to bookstores are fixed and that it would not adjust following the regulations.

Zhu said that outside China, bookstores inform the publishers of planned promotions to apply for a discount. In China,

promotions are decided entirely by the sellers.

Readers already bemoan the cost of books. While many still visit bookstores to browse, most purchases take place online. "I enjoy visiting bookstores to touch and see the books first, but I will only buy if there is a discount. Last year, I spent 3,000 yuan on Dangdang and Amazon. For comparison, I spent 1,000 yuan in bookstores," Edward Zhang, a Shanghai resident, said.

Making the change

The new regulation was framed by the three industry associations over three years. "More than 50 major publishers told us their concerns, and they were considered in this plan," the Publishers Association's spokesman Huang said.

Despite the association having no legal authority, Huang said there are other ways to exert its power.

Huang said it will send the regulation to all the publishers and distributors with a deadline for when it must take effect.

A new office set up by the associations would monitor all clients to which they sell books. They will check and record what prices they are selling the books at and inform the media of any bookstores selling too low. The publishers have pledged to adopt joint sanctions against any violators.

Businessman under fire for Yale donation

A Chinese entrepreneur recently learned that no good deed goes unpunished. The Yale School of Management announced January 4 that it received a pledge of \$8,888,888 (60 million yuan) from alumnus Zhang Lei to help build its new business school campus. Eight is considered a lucky number in China, but it turned out to be unlucky for Zhang, who is being criticized for his generosity overseas.

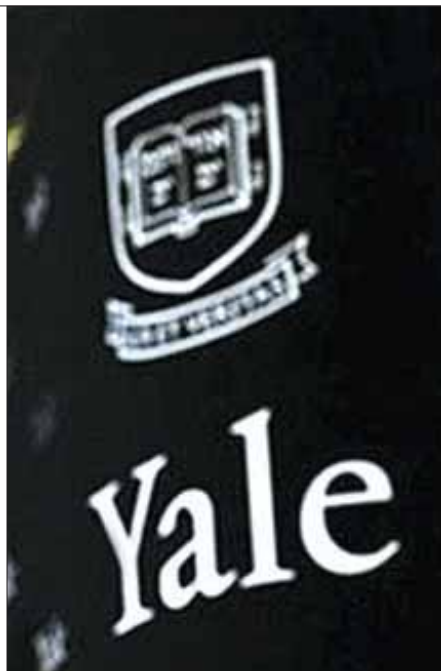
Zhang Lei's huge donation to Yale University has sparked a patriotic backlash on the Web, with some calling him a "traitor" for not giving the cash to a school in China.

But many other Web postings and Chinese media commentaries have come to his defense, saying Chinese universities don't deserve such a donation.

Zhang, who attended Renmin University of China before his graduate business studies in Connecticut, US, said he donated the money because the Ivy League school had changed his life. He chose the sum because eight is an auspicious number in China.

Zhang, who hails from Jiangxi Province, is a founder and managing partner of Beijing-based fund manager Hillhouse Capital Management. He graduated from Yale in 2002.

(Agencies)



Zhang Lei's donation to Yale has sparked a patriotic backlash on the Web. AFP Photo



Zhang Lei

Zhang Lei's response

Zhang Lei said in an email January 7 that he hopes his grant to the Yale School of Management will help strengthen ties between the university and China, the *Yale Daily News* reported.

The entrepreneur said that for years the relationship between China and Yale has been mostly one-way, with the university serving as benefactor. He said he anticipates that his \$8-million donation will be the start of a more reciprocal relationship. "I think

this is simply the right thing to do at the right time," Zhang said.

According to an article on Yale's website, a portion of the sum will go to a scholarship fund for Chinese students studying international relations at the university's Jackson Institute of Global Affairs. A part of it will be used to fund a variety of China-related activities at the university, such as a program to train Chinese university presidents undertaken with China's Ministry of Education.

Expert says Chinese universities need to improve

The real question here is why Chinese universities cannot get generous donations from their alumni, not why Zhang chose to give it to an American university.

Zhang's action involved a personal matter and has nothing to do with morality or ideology. Besides, Chinese students at Yale will also benefit from his generosity.

If Chinese universities want more dona-

tions, they should perform better. Otherwise, wealthy Chinese people will continue to donate to foreign universities – just as they prefer to study there.

Lastly, only credible universities can attract more donations. Nobody wants to give away money that will only support a school official's luxurious lifestyle.

– Li Xing, professor at University of Science and Technology Beijing

Voices

Netizens

Don't forget your motherland

Don't forget that China is your motherland! You wouldn't be criticized if you had made a great contribution to your motherland before making a donation to your foreign alma mater. But have you made any contributions to your motherland? Do you love your motherland? Don't you have any sense of patriotism?

– anonymous on huanqiu.com

Ask why elites prefer to go abroad

What we should ask is why Chinese elites prefer to study and live abroad. Don't go blindly blaming Chinese people overseas. We need to ask why they are leaving their native land.

– Liangbo1977 on ifeng.com

Renmin University Students

Do not forget your Chinese alma mater

It is Zhang's prerogative to do whatever he wants with his possessions; it has nothing to do with right or wrong. We should not interfere in his personal affairs. However, Renmin University provided him with a lot of opportunities. Even though he said it was Yale that changed his life, he should also show gratitude to Renmin University and donate a portion of the money to his Chinese alma mater, which badly needs funding.

– Yang Min, postgraduate student

Generosity will help Chinese students in the US

I wish Zhang had made the grant to Renmin University rather than Yale. But it is more worthwhile to give the money to Yale because his generosity translates into more scholarships for Chinese students studying economics at Yale. In addition, his action helps create a favorable image of Chinese people in the US.

– Yefengge, netizen on pinggu.org

Media

Gratitude or patriotism

Don't misinterpret the donation as a symbol of patriotism. It was an academic act; people are the ones who added patriotic overtones. Such a narrow-minded interpretation is hard to understand.

Zhang is an alumnus of Yale, and his generosity to his alma mater was an expression of gratitude; it had nothing to do with patriotism. If a Chinese national who makes a donation to Yale is labeled unpatriotic, then what do we call a foreigner who makes a donation to a Chinese university? Education is borderless. Donations to improve a school are a matter related to education and culture; it has nothing to do with one's nationality.

– Chen Yizhou, commentator at Security Times

A lesson to educational system

Some universities here are only keen on undertaking beautification projects, such as constructing grand buildings and imposing school gates. It remains questionable whether the donations they are given are used to improve their curriculum. Chinese academia should take Zhang's case as a lesson and use donations to improve the educational system.

– Wei Wenbin, commentator at Guangzhou Daily (By Liang Meilan)

Google China exit would hand Baidu control of market

Google's possible departure from China may be a defining pronouncement that the world's biggest Web market is an inhospitable place for foreigners.

An exit by the world's most popular Internet search engine may be followed by Yahoo! and eBay and leave China without a foreign company operating independently to serve more than 330 million Web users.

Google, of Mountain View, California, said January 12 it may shut Google.cn and close its China offices.

Baidu will pick up "the lion's share" of Google's search business should the US company leave, Nomura Holdings analyst Jin Yoon wrote in a report yesterday. Tencent, operator of China's biggest online chat service, and Sohu.com would also gain business, Yoon said.

Baidu's US depositary receipts jumped 13.7 percent, the most in over a year, on the Nasdaq Stock Market on January 13, while Google fell 0.6 percent, to \$587.09.

Google's technology and efforts to tailor its services made it the most successful overseas Internet operator in China, analyst Elinor Leung said.

Google will stop censoring results on its Google.cn site, the company said. China's Internet authorities are seeking more information about Google's intentions, Xinhua News Agency reported, citing an unnamed "high-ranking" official within the State Council Information Office. Wang Lijian, a Beijing-based spokesman for the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology, said he couldn't comment as he was unaware of the situation.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs declined to comment.

Provincial party chief refused job

A provincial party chief was rejected for a job after an interview he received while posing a human resources market, dahe.cn reported today.

Lu Zhongong, 59, party chief of Henan Province, tried to convince an interviewer at a talent market on Thursday in Jiaozuo, Henan Province, that he was the right candidate for the job.

"I am old but I have good contacts and experience with the media. I can use my social relations in this circle," Lu said.

To which the interviewer responded: "I am sorry but we only consider people below 40 years old. We hope to hire someone young who can make business trips frequently."

Lu says he is concerned about the middle-aged people who are being pushed out by the human resources market.

"Middle-age people have to support families and have the ability to work. The government should create more jobs for people in their 40s and 50s," Lu said.

(Agencies)

Who's at the door?

Direct selling may open future to rural youth

By Huang Daohen

When the doorbell rings, you might be expecting a McDonald's delivery or a repairman. But these days, that surprise visitor is probably a well-dressed salesperson with a case of creams, vitamins and other personal care items.

Direct selling, also known as door-to-door selling, was banned several years ago by the government. But after changes to the laws in December 2006, it has flourished in China.

US companies like Amway, Avon and Mary Kay are a tempting offer for young people from the countryside, especially women eager to join an industry that promises overnight riches.

But direct selling has its skeptics.



Direct sellers often offer product demos, like this one at a beauty and hairdressing expo in Taiyuan, Shanxi Province.

Reuters Photo

A new boom

On a chilly morning during the New Year's holiday, shoppers lined up outside a shop in downtown Haidian district waiting for the doors to open. They had one goal: big discounts on cosmetics, dishwashing detergents and other nutrition, personal care and beauty products made by Amway.

"I've trusted Amway since I first heard about the brand in 1994. A friend introduced me to it," said a middle-aged woman named Zhang who spent 400 yuan on her shopping spree.

But big spenders and lines are a rarity for Amway, Li Jian, vice manager of the store, said. "The launch of direct stores is only a small part of Amway's sales strategy in China."

The company's primary sales model continues to rely on independent representatives selling products door-to-door, Li said.

There may be merit to that direct selling strategy. When the global financial crisis rocked businesses around the world, Amway achieved a sales miracle: it posted a 17.6-billion-yuan profit – a 28-percent increase over 2007.

For many, the victory rejuvenated faith in direct selling.

Avon and Mary Kay, two other companies that sell door-to-door in China, also posted amazing gains. Mary Kay's China revenue doubled to 4 billion yuan over the last three years, with a 27-percent boost in 2008.

Wooing rural youth

Old American brands have found new life in China.

Strong domestic consumption is the major reason, and an ample supply of young people in second- and third-tier cities and rural areas who expect a quick fortune make up the perfect sales force, Li said.

Li, 34, from Shandong Province, knows the industry well. Before he started direct selling seven years ago, he was an introverted middle

school teacher.

Unlike the legions chasing quick success, Li said he was seeking a way to change his life. He came to Beijing in 2001 to attend an Amway seminar on direct selling.

"It was impressive," Li said. Each training director had a wealth of anecdotal advice to pass on to new members. Instead of teaching how to sell a product, the directors focused on exploring human nature to inspire the

"I love this job because they give me professional training and I get a chance to learn new things every day."

– Yin Qun

desire for wealth and success.

He decided to join after several seminars. Five years later, Li is one of the top Amway sellers in China. The company made him an employee and sent him to head up its Haidian store.

Li may have found the change he wanted, but legions of young direct sellers are just starting their struggle. Yin Qun, a new Amway recruit, is one example.

Yin, a 21-year-old woman from Henan Province, came to the city two years ago. Before becoming an Amway agent, she worked as a cashier and then as a secretary.

"I never finished high school but Amway doesn't require new sellers to have knowledge or experience," she said. Yin believes she will be successful if she puts in enough effort.

But Amway has yet to pay off. During her first month, she was pressured to meet unrealistic sales goals at a time when she had no clients.

But Yin remains optimistic. "I love this job because they give me professional training and I get a chance to learn new things every day," she said.

The government does not track people who leave the countryside in search of work or a better life, but the China Academy of Social Sciences estimates the migrant population at 150 million.

Some of those young people choose direct selling over hard labor. Currently, Amway China, the top direct seller, claims 300,000 salespeople in its network.

Criticism of the process

The boom is not without controversy. Direct selling first emerged at the end of the 1980s, and the concept caught on quickly.

"The good reputation was short-lived. When pyramid schemes moved in and started posing as direct sellers, the government banned the business model," said Luo Kai, a teacher at the Central University of Finance and Economics.

Though the government lifted the ban in 2006 after lobbying from American companies, Luo said that does not mean the industry is clean.

Some companies are reportedly manipulating and misleading sales recruits. "Some recruit people in deceptive ways, like promising that they can become super rich in a month," Luo said.

He said there are also some small direct sellers who are still operating as a pyramid scheme: the bulk of the group leader's income comes from commissions and bonuses afforded to lower agents.

"That starts a vicious circle when sales representatives aim only for profit," Luo said.

Still, the model has considerable opportunity for growth in China, he said.

Background

Requirements of direct selling companies

1. Starting requirement

Foreign-funded direct selling companies must invest a minimum of 68 million yuan, exist as a business outside China for at least three years and have membership in the World Federation of Direct Selling Associations. Domestic companies must show sales of 500 million yuan for three years before they can apply for a direct selling license.

2. Large deposit

Every direct selling company must put down a deposit of 20 million to 30 million yuan. The deposit is used to pay fines and compensation to consumers. The size of the deposit prevents smaller, weaker companies from entering the market.

3. Trainee limit

Training courses held at a direct selling company's headquarters can include no more than 600 people. Trainees must register with the local public security bureau and industrial and commercial departments. The trainee limit at the provincial level is 400. In-store training is limited to 200 trainees. Smaller locations are limited to 50.

Marry only for love?

Paintings cheer on single women



Yi hopes her artwork will inspire single women to reconsider the meaning of marriage.

Photos provided by Yi Yang

By Li Zhixin

A street-side exhibition of sexy, pro-singlehood paintings by a young female artist has raised eyebrows. Yi Yang's artwork encouraged single young females to revel in their unmarried state until they find true love.

| Comment

The 28-year-old artist, who is single and considered a *sheng nü*—a woman in her late 20s or early 30s who does not have a boyfriend or husband—displayed six sexy oil paintings on her car parked near the World Trade Center on December 31.

The images incorporated the female body, fashion and surrealism. Signs tacked onto her license plate told the exhibition title: "Sheng Nü – Don't get married and enjoy deceiving men!"

"I decided to display my paintings in the capital's central business district where many single young women work, so this might serve as a wake-up call for them to resist pressure from their families and society to get married," Yi said. "For me, *sheng nü* is a positive word. It is being a single lady with a good education, high income, high IQ and good looks."

Yi thinks marriage for women is equivalent to slavery, and she hopes her artwork will encourage single women to reconsider the meaning of marriage and contemplate what they really want from life.

But she is not averse to couplehood: she supports it as long as people get together out of true love and not necessity or convenience.

People gathered around her car to take photos. Some considered her "very brave" to express such a nontraditional opinion on marriage. Others thought her behavior was extreme.

The term *sheng nü*, a pejorative meaning "left-over woman," is considered a social problem by many. Beijing alone, which has a population of 16 million, has more than 500,000 single women of marriageable age.

Many *sheng nü* feel pressure from their parents and society to wed; they face the dilemma of whether to get married at a certain age – to anyone suitable – or stay single until they find true love. *Beijing Today* asked a number of single women what they thought about love and marriage.

Marriage without love is pitiful

I won't get married just for the sake of being married. Marriage is a decision that should not be taken lightly.

To most Chinese people, having children is a crucial part of life; having no heir is regarded as the gravest way to be unfilial. But if a couple marries due to family pressure or just to bear children and they can't tolerate each other, they will be walking along divergent paths. If there is no real love in marriage, it will be hard to maintain a long and happy life together.

— Xing Aiping, 31, consultant

Avoid self-centeredness

The main reason it is important to get married is to get rid of self-centeredness, the enemy of life. Self-centeredness is why looking for love means never finding true love. Because searching for the person you think you need to be happy is still about you. It's about your needs, your desires, and your plans for the future. If you're the center of your life, how interesting can you be? It means you've never found any-

thing outside of yourself more important or more compelling than you are – which only means you don't know how to love. Which means you wouldn't make a good mate. Which means your phone rings less.

Stop thinking about when your true love will come or who that person might be. I think the only way to find true love is to quit looking for it. But pay attention when God delivers that person into your life, get to know that person, and then get married.

— Susan Clear, 36, freelancer

Marriage about life, not only love

The decision to get married should always be made with a lot of thought. Marriage is right for many people, but there are some who can't deal with commitment or responsibility. Do you want to have a family? A husband or wife, children, a pet? If this has never appealed to you, stay single; if it does, go and marry.

The ideal is to find your "other half," your soul mate. But love and marriage are two different things. To marry your true love is like winning the lottery. But even if I fail to meet my

true love, I will still get married because marriage is about life, not only love.

I think marriage is a form of life guarantee for women. Maybe the one you marry is not the one you love, but as long as he takes responsibility for the family, he is a good mate. If you stay single just because you don't find your true love, that can become a form of bondage.

— Maria Bencurova, 34, PhD student

True love lies in your own heart

There is no foolproof way to tell true love. If two people have feelings for each other, then get married. But passionate love doesn't exist every moment. When holding hands with your partner feels as ordinary as linking your own two hands, you will probably forget the taste of love. Don't crave endless passionate love; a simple life together is also a form of happiness.

Nobody wants to end up alone. People want someone with whom they can share their joys and sorrows. Those who claim they are content to be alone are too young and inexperienced; at a certain age they will have to face reality.

— Huan Huan, 28, teacher

| Background

Country faces growing gender imbalance



Yi with her controversial works at downtown Beijing.

More than 24 million Chinese men of marriageable age could find themselves without a spouse by 2020, the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS) said in a new report. The gender imbalance among newborns is the most serious demographic problem for the country's population of 1.3 billion, it said.

The academy cites sex-specific abortions as a major factor, due to traditional bias toward male children, and says gender selection abortions are "extremely common." This is especially true in rural areas; ultra-sound scans, first introduced in the late 1980s, have only increased the practice. The latest figures show that 100 girls are born for every 119 boys.

Wang Guangzhou, a CASS researcher, said the implications are that men in poorer parts of the country may remain single for life. "The chance of getting married will be rare if a man is more than 40 years old and lives in the countryside. They will be dependent on social security as they age and will have fewer resources," he said.

A reluctance among young urban couples to have a first or second child is exacerbating the problem. In some provinces, 130 boys are born for every 100 girls. The growing imbalance means forced prostitution and human trafficking is becoming rampant in some parts of the country, the CASS report said.

Canadian psychiatrist continues suicide-prevention campaign

Phillips, who has been living in China for 25 years, is one of the first foreigners to call attention to suicide as a crucial public health problem. He is currently the executive director of the Beijing Suicide Research and Prevention Center, which campaigns to reduce the economic and social pressures on both the family and society.

From foreign student to psychiatrist

Phillips was working at the University of Auckland Hospital, in New Zealand, in 1974 when he joined a three-week study tour of China. He was impressed with the country's "barefoot doctors": people with basic medical and paramedic training who took served as doctors in rural areas, where city-trained doctors refused to relocate. Phillips thought barefoot doctors played a vital role in public health care.

In 1976 he returned to the country to study Chinese for a year each at the Beijing Language Institute, now Beijing Language and Culture University, and Nanjing University. Afterwards he went to the US to do graduate studies in epidemiology and anthropology.

On his third trip to China in 1985, he applied and was granted permanent residency. His first local job was as psychiatrist at a hospital in Shashi, Hubei province, where he stayed for seven years.

Suicide as public health problem

Phillips began studying the domestic suicide situation in the mid 1990s, when "suicide was less taboo," he said. In 1994 he moved to Beijing Huilongguan Hospital, where he became

By He Jianwei

Suicide is among the top five causes of death in China, where most people refuse to see a doctor about their psychological problems, Canadian psychiatrist Michael Phillips said last Sunday at a talk titled "Raising Awareness about Suicide in China."



Michael Phillips (second from left) is one of the first foreigners to study suicide in China.

CFP Photo

its director of epidemiological research. He now heads the hospital's World Health Organization (WHO) Collaboration Center for Research and Training in Suicide Prevention.

In 2002 Phillips and his Chinese colleagues estimated the rates of schizophrenia, suicide and suicide among schizophrenics among mainlanders 15 years old and above using 1995 to 1999 data

from the national census, a psychiatric epidemiology study and a psychological autopsy study. Results revealed that more than 4 million people had schizophrenia and 285,000 died of suicide each year, 10 percent of whom were schizophrenics.

They also found that unlike in developed countries, suicide rates in Chinese rural areas were three to five times greater than

in urban areas. It was the top killer among 15 to 34 year olds; in North America and Europe, it ranked third or fourth in the same age group.

Phillips and his co-researchers concluded that suicide in China had two main causes: schizophrenia (65 percent of cases) and social problems (35 percent). The landmark study was published in the medical journal

The Lancet the same year.

"Our discovery of high suicide rates in people with schizophrenia indicated that this was a major public-health problem, which required the development of suicide-prevention strategies specifically designed for schizophrenics," Phillips said.

Need to build a national network

Chinese people are wary of developing cancer, heart disease and AIDS, but ignore mental disease and suicide, Phillips said. "It is necessary to build a national suicide-prevention network. Society must realize that suicide is a problem as severe as cancers and AIDS," Phillips said during his speech last Sunday.

The same year his study on schizophrenia and suicide was published, Phillips worked with local experts to establish the Beijing Suicide Research and Prevention Center. They immediately drew up an eight-year plan to build a national suicide-prevention network.

The center opened a national suicide-prevention hotline, which is now staffed by more than 40 trained counselors. Two or three times a year, it sponsors activities for the relatives of suicide victims.

This is the program's eighth year and the road has been littered with challenges. "It takes time to change people's attitude toward suicide and to educate psychiatrists," Phillips said.

But going forward is the only way to move. "If possible, we will organize an association for people whose relatives committed suicide, because they also need mental health care," Phillips said.

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China playing pivotal role to ensure peace, stability in South Asia

By Chu Meng

China is playing a pivotal role to ensure peace and stability in South Asia, Pakistan's former prime minister Nawaz Sharif said in Beijing late Wednesday.

Sharif said China was Pakistan's "most reliable friend" and that the countries' "all-weather" friendship was "time-tested" and will remain strong.

"Pakistan and China are enjoying excellent friendly relations in manifold arenas, which are growing with the passage of time. The two countries have an identical vision on most issues of global and regional significance," said Sharif, who heads the opposition party Pakistan Muslim

League-Nawaz.

He said he appreciated the strong support of China's leaders and citizens and their generous assistance to Pakistan over the years. China's substantial contributions to the Pakistani economy have won the gratitude of the people, Sharif said. He said he is confident Sino-Pakistan ties would continue to prosper, and that he would contribute to the effort whenever the opportunity arose.

Some 10,000 Chinese workers are involved in 120 projects in Pakistan, including infrastructure construction, power generation, mining and telecommunications development, the Council on Foreign Relations

said. Chinese investments in the country amounted to \$4 billion (27 billion yuan) in 2007 and is expected to rise to \$15 billion this year, the Washington-based think tank said.

Sharif was received by Vice President Xi Jinping when he arrived with his delegation Monday. On Wednesday, he visited top local businesses. Deputy Minister of the Communist Party of China's International Department, Liu Jieyi, hosted a luncheon meeting for Sharif where they discussed bilateral cooperation and the region's security.

Sharif will be meeting with government leaders and economists during his one-week stay.



Pakistan's former prime minister Nawaz Sharif

Photo by Zhang Yin

Embassy rejects reports of Iranian drug smugglers' execution

By Zhao Hongyi

The Iranian Embassy rejected reports circulating the past couple of weeks that nationals convicted of drug smuggling in China have been executed.

"Since three years ago, a total of 46 Iranians have been charged with trading in illegal drugs in China. Most of these people were not drug smugglers but were in fact ordinary airline passengers who were unaware of the nar-

cotics packed in their luggage," Iran's Mehr News Agency quoted an embassy official as saying.

The embassy released a statement last Friday saying that "no Iranian has been arrested in the past year for drug smuggling, or executed for that matter." It said "Tehran's embassy in Beijing is determined to defend the rights and interests of all Iranians residing in China."

The statement said a

number of Iranian detainees received death sentences two years ago, but that the verdicts were still on appeal at the appellate court in Beijing. When contacted for further comment, a consul said he had no knowledge of the issue.

The embassy's press officer Mohammad Ali Ziaei declined to comment on the "sensitive issue," but willingly discussed another charge against Iranian

nationals: an attack Tuesday against the search engine Baidu. Media reported that the site was defaced by hackers who left a message saying, "This site has been hacked by the Iranian Cyber Army."

Ziaei said the Iranian government condemned the attack and said it went against Iran's pro-China foreign policy. "Iran condemns these actions and hopes it won't bring any negative impact

on bilateral relations," he said, adding that perpetrators could also be foreign hackers operating from Iran.

Baidu was attacked Tuesday morning and was inaccessible for the rest of the day. Netizens said the hackers tampered with the search engine's Domain Name System (DNS), redirecting traffic to another site. Baidu's engineers later confirmed that the attack came from hackers in Iran.

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Modern Sky releases charity album featuring Yoko Ono



Queen Sea Big Sharks performed new songs at the album launch last Friday.

Photos by Modern Sky

By Wang Yu

Yugongyishan hosted a rock concert last Friday for the launch of *Sing for China*, a three-CD album to raise funds for orphaned children with HIV.

The record, produced by Modern Sky Records, features dozens of artists from China and seven other countries, including John Lennon's widow Yoko Ono. Proceeds will go to the music label's partner charity, the US-based China Aids Orphan Fund (CAOF), which works with orphaned children with HIV in central China.

Three of Beijing's most popular bands – Queen Sea Big Sharks, Casino Demon and B-side Lovers – took the stage during the concert last Friday. It was the bands' first show together since their successful joint US tour last September, and they wowed the audience by performing new songs.

"It's such an honor that our music can help others," Fu Han, lead singer of Queen Sea Big Sharks, said.

The album is the brain child of Shen Lihui, Modern Sky Records' CEO, who conceived of the project in mid 2008 as the Chinese version of US artists' "We are the World" campaign in the 1980s. He was inspired by the success of his first charity project, Resonance Fund, which raised funds for deaf children and involved media groups and IT giants such as Sina and Nokia.

"Resonance Fund was the first charity event I organized. Such activities were alien to me before I visited the deaf children," Shen says. "As a musician, I could feel the pain of those kids because they cannot hear music, the most beautiful sound in the world."

Only later did Shen realize that *Sing for China* was a tremendous work load for an independent music company. The record contains songs by 44 artists and bands, including Yoko Ono, Xiu Xiu, Phoenix and Great Northern.

"The artists belonged to various labels, which meant we had to negotiate with a huge number of music agents and managers. Then not all the music companies and artists were willing to share album copyrights with us, so we had to talk to so many more people than those who appear on the song list just to ensure that the three CDs would happen," he said.

Partnering with CAOF helped Modern Sky in their overseas negotiations: having a US charity as recipient helped secure a "yes" from foreign artists and helped open doors. Yoko Ono, the Japanese artist and widow of John Lennon, wrote "We Are Dying

specifically for the project. Ono, whom Shen admitted is a big selling point for the record, accepted Modern Sky's invitation without hesitation. "The last time I was in New York, she was recording the song. Ono was so glad she could help the children. You must know that she's 77 now. I just don't know whether I will still have the passion for charity at that age," he said with admiration.

The first production of *Sing for China* produced 2,000 copies. At a time when CDs are fast becoming history, Shen said he is not worried selling the album will be a problem. He said he believes that young Chinese music lovers have open hearts and hands for the needy.

"We have so many artists from everywhere in the world in the record. We expect the voice of charity to be heard by more people in the future," Shen said.

Talk microfinance, philanthropy over drinks

By Annie Wei

Some 50 people gathered at D-Lounge in Sanlitun, Tuesday to discuss microfinance, philanthropy, and corporate social responsibility over drinks. The event was hosted by Wokai, a US-based microfinance organization that provides small loans to impoverished Chinese citizens.

Some of the attendees wanted to join Wokai's roster of volunteers; others were curious about the organization that has attracted media attention both in China and the US. Many were inspired by Muhammad Yunus, a Bangladeshi economist, who

established a bank that provided small loans to the poor on safe terms so they could help themselves. Yunus was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2006.

At the gathering, Sara Jane Ho, Wokai's Asia business development associate, compared the development of microfinance in China to that in countries like India and Bangladesh. She also talked about how Wokai helps farmers in Inner Mongolia and Sichuan, and the challenges of running a foreign nongovernment organization in China.

Calvin Chin, founder of Qifang, an organization that provides stu-

dent loans, was a guest speaker and fielded questions about the trust issue between students and loan givers. Chin said Qifang does background check and verifies personal information through the borrower's school, and that the loans are given directly to the school to prevent misappropriation of funds.

Wokai was established in 2008 by two American women who studied in China and wanted to help the country's 200 million citizens who live on less than 7 yuan a day. For more information about Wokai and Qifang, visit wokai.org and qifang.cn.

Event

Free Chinese Lessons

The China Trade Commission (CTC) is sponsoring an 18-week basic Chinese language program for foreign children ages 5 to 8; the program is taught by local university students majoring in language and linguistics. The program is offered in cooperation with Rainbow Theater, which has donated the classroom facilities in Haidian District.

Classes are held weekly. The first module began on January 13; the succeeding ones will start February 3 and 24. Those who complete the course will receive a certificate from the CTC and will be eligible to enroll in private tutoring programs if they wish to continue their studies. The offer is limited to 300 students.

Where: Rainbow Theater, 7/F Building 12, Wanquan Xinxin Jiayuan, 11 Wanliu Dong Lu, Haidian District

When: Every Wednesday or Sunday, 7-8:30 pm

Tel: 8255 2978

Cost: Free

Spanish Valencia dancing troupe

This troupe is known for scouting the best and brightest young flamenco talent and training them to be world-class performers.

Where: Sino-Japanese Youth Center, 40 Liangmaqiao Lu, Chaoyang District

When: January 15, 7:30-9 pm

Tel: 6468 3311 ext. 3163

Cost: 100-1,000 yuan

Asian Beauty Studio Photography Class

Beijing Center of Photography invites portrait photography enthusiasts to participate in a studio photo shoot. Participants will experience what it's like to work with trained models and a professional makeup artist. The course also includes Photoshop editing tips.

Where: Room 14, Jianwai SOHO West Building 14, Jianwai Dajie, Chaoyang District

When: January 16, 2-4 pm

Cost: 200 yuan

Email:

team@beijingcpc.com

Meandering Mandarin – Flower Market

Students focus on mastering practical Chinese dialogue in small groups of three to five. Participants spend two hours in the classroom learning key words and phrases, then spend an hour and a half outdoors practicing what they've learned.

Where: China Culture Center, A201 Kent Center, 29 Liangmaqiao Lu, Chaoyang District

When: January 16, 2-5 pm

Tel: 6432 9341

Price: 150 yuan (includes study kits and transportation fee)

(By Wei Ying)



Wokai regularly holds similar events.

Photos provided by Wokai.org

Beijing visa administration opens two new offices

By Han Manman

Beijing's visa administration recently opened branches in the central business district (CBD) and on Financial Street to meet the needs of the city's growing number of foreign workers.

The new visa offices were set up to serve the 10,000 companies in the financial and business zones, which include financial supervision authorities, financial institutions and foreign enterprises staffed by 300,000 Chinese and foreign employees, said Yu Hongyuan, deputy director general of the Beijing Public Security Bureau (PSB).

Yu said the Exit and Entry Certificate Reception Stations can only serve people working for enterprises registered with the CBD and Financial Street administration committees. Other foreigners still need to go to the Exit and Entry Administration's headquarters in Andingmen, Dongcheng District.

Services offered include visa processing and issuance of residence permits, as well as the registration of a corporation's employees with Exit-Entry Permit to Hong Kong and Macau.

Foreigners working in the CBD and Financial Street can take care of these legalities at the Exit and Entry Certificate Reception Stations, which also



Two Exit and Entry Certificate Reception Stations have opened in the CBD and on Financial Street.

Photo provided by Lin Song

provide translators for non-Chinese speakers, Yu said.

Processing normally takes one work day.

Before the two branches opened, only the Beijing Exit and Entry Administration headquarters could process visas and resident permits.

Yu said the PSB has plans

to open additional visa offices in Zhongguancun, Yizhuang Economic and Technological Development Zone.

Exit and Entry Certificate Reception Station – Financial Street

Address: Room 401, Unit 1, Building 2, 4 Jinchun International Apartment, Guangcheng

Lu, Xicheng District

Open: Every Tuesday, 10 am – 3 pm

Exit and Entry Certificate Reception Stations – CBD

Address: Room 1009, 10/F Jingguang Center Office Building, Hujialou, Chaoyang District

Open: Every Wednesday, 10 am – 3 pm

Flower and pet market opens in Haidian

A new flower and pet market in Zizhuqiao opened Monday, becoming more to more than a hundred vendors displaced when the popular Guanyuan flower and pet market on Fuchengmen Nei Avenue closed late last year.

More than a thousand people flocked to the market, dubbed "New Guanyuan," on opening day to shop for birds, fish, turtles, guinea pigs and cats, and pet accessories like fish tanks, bird cages and kennels.

The market's management said vendors include more than 80 percent of the old flower and pet market's shopkeepers. Stalls are available rent-free for the first five months to attract more vendors, said Gu Xiaofeng, the mar-



The new Guanyuan market sells pets and flowers.

CFP Photo

ket's general manager.

Some vendors said the new market has recreated the old market's much-loved ambience. It drew hordes of pet lovers who exchanged stories and information about raising pets.

The municipal government shut down the old market last December, citing fire hazards due to the building's aging electric wires and poor fire-fighting equipment. It was also part of a crackdown on illegal pet vendors.

Guanyuan Market – Haidian

Where: 5 Guangyuanfa, Zizhuqiao Lu, Haidian District

Open: 9 am – 5 pm

Tel: 6868 7210

(By Wei Ying)

Wine events in January

By Annie Wei

The beginning of the year is a slow month for wine events, but vino lovers fear not: below are four events worth checking out even if you have to brave the cold.

Wine n' Dine

This starts off with a cooking demonstration of hand-pulled noodle soup. An eight-course dinner follows, with two all-you-can-drink imported wines.

Where: Black Sesame Restaurant, 3 Heizima Hutong, Dongcheng District

Dongcheng District

When: January 15, 7-10 pm

Cost: 250 yuan

Email:

blacksesamekitchen@gmail.com

for reservations

Wine n' Dine

This is a 10-course meal featuring a number of imported wines.

Where: Black Sesame Restaurant, 3 Heizima Hutong, Dongcheng District

When: January 20, 7-10 pm

Cost: 150 yuan

Email:

blacksesamekitchen@gmail.com

for reservations

Australia Day Tasting

Try award-winning Australian wines from Australia, grown in Hewitson, Yering Station, Mount Langi, Kangarilla Road, Xanadu and Yarrabank.

Where: Grand Millennium Hotel, 7 Dongsanhuan Zhong Lu, Chaoyang District

When: January 26, 2-5 pm for hotel staff and the media, 5-10 pm for invited guests

Cost: Free from 2-5 pm and

only for invited guests after

Tel: 5869 7050

Email:

events@thewinerepublic.com

Art and Wine

The Wine Republic and Timezone 8 are hosting this dinner featuring wines from Mount Langi, Victoria, Australia.

Where: Timezone 8, 798 Art District, 4 Jiuxianqiao Lu, Chaoyang District

When: January 29, 7-10 pm

Tel: 5869 7050

Cost: 388 yuan

ASK Beijing Today

Email your questions to: weiyi@ynet.com

I just moved into an apartment with ugly and dirty sofa covers, and I want to replace them. A friend in Shanghai said I should be able to find someone who can come in, measure the sofa and sew new covers for 400 yuan excluding the fabric. Do you have any recommendations?

Some fabric shops and curtain and bedclothes makers offer the service. The price generally depends on the material you choose; whoever goes to your apartment can bring catalogues of fabric samples. Ask textile vendors on the third floor of Yashow market in Sanlitun.

You can also try Beijing Ai Ming Hua Textile Company, which charges 35 yuan per meter of a single-color canvas, including labor cost for sofa covers and curtains. You can call them at 6417 9233 and look for Xu Hanming, the manager.

Would you recommend buying a treadmill, since I never have time to go to the gym? How much does a treadmill normally cost?

A treadmill is not a cheap investment: it costs on average a couple of thousand yuan. First, make sure that you really will use it; many home exercise equipment lie unused. Second, is there enough space for the machine in your home to make working out comfortable?

I bought a pair of Giordano shoes at Ginza Mall, but I find them too tight. I've kept the original box and receipt, including the shoe stuffing, so do you think they'll let me exchange them for a bigger size? Do Chinese shops have a return policy?

Since it's a well-known brand in a high-end store like Ginza Mall, then you have a good chance of getting an exchange. Returns are usually accepted within 15 days and exchanges or repairs within three months. But all sales are final at clothing markets, even tourist draws like the Silk Market.

How much does it cost to use the parking lot under The Village?

It costs 5 yuan per hour. People who dine at certain restaurants at The Village can get free parking; you just need to have your parking ticket validated. Please check with the restaurants for more information.

I'm interested in the UGG boots I saw at the Silk Market. I offered the sales lady 70 yuan, but she waved me away. How much do you think is a reasonable price for them?

For a pair of fake-fur UGG boots, you can offer about 150 yuan; the higher the heel, the pricier it gets. Real-fur UGG boots starts at 350 yuan.

(By Wei Ying)

Paper for

Locals make paper furniture a reality

By He Jianwei

Paper furniture stole the show at the 2009 Milan Furniture Fair, an international furniture exhibition held in Italy to support eco-design in the home. It was the second appearance of the curious pieces, which debuted at the 2008 Cologne Furniture Fair in Germany.

The furniture at these exhibitions was art, and not for consumer purchase.

But three Beijingers are trying to change that.

Last year, the three men formed a new furniture brand dedicated to slashing the costs of paper furniture to make it widely available.



Homepaper Paper Furniture appeals to people into sustainable living.

Photos provided by Yin Xiaomeng

Yin Xiaomeng resigned from his job more than a year ago to start a paper furniture company.

"When I worked for a company, I was stuck meeting the clients' great ideas, there was no room for my own ideas," Yin says.

After researching the market, the three founders decided to start a "paper furniture" brand and put their idea into production late last year.

Some stores down the street are on display, and most are sold out on Taobao.com.

The brand has already received its environmental friendliness certification.

Unexpected

Even the lightest of furniture, trusting paper to keep things up and Yao admits he too was surprised.

That changed in 2008, when he moved to the Zhou district.

In 1998, Yao rented a small room and propped up his 29-inch television on a cardboard unmarred.

"The television was even after two years it didn't break. That was when I realized that paper could bear weight for long."

Granted, an upside-down box is hardly what anyone would expect. "No one except a back two years," he says.

So he decided to turn his idea into a net or table out of cardboard.

"Environmentally, paper is also a good material. Unlike wooden or steel furniture, paper is also eco-friendly."

The company's first product is a shelf, each shelf of weight can hold 10 kilograms of books. The

the home



cardboard box with rows of smaller boxes to act as shelves.

Waterproof ... kind of

The Achilles heel of paper furniture is H₂O, and that problem of waterproofing took much more time to solve.

Paper is very weak to water. A few drops is all it takes for paper to fold under any weight.



g and two of his colleagues in an advertising agency more go to pursue their project of ure for the masses.

or the advertiser, we were nts' needs. Even if we had no room to pursue them,"

the market throughout led "Homepaper Paper Furniture" first pieces into mass production. The new furniture pieces can be ordered on

ready won a following for endliness and convenient

strength

of ladies may be wary about y their derivatives off the dirt, was a skeptic - at first. oooo.

ed an apartment in Tong-at of better furniture, he ch television on a cardboard two years later, he found the

is around 40 kilograms and did not squash the box. zed cardboard might be able g periods," he says.

ie-down empty cardboard yone would call "furniture." her would live like that for

ake a shot at making a cabi-board.

riendly products are trendy. l furniture, they can save asier to recycle," he says. rst product was a book-which could hold 50 kilo-bookshelf is a square

Practical and safe

Yao takes eco-friendliness to the extreme. Assembly uses no glue or nails, and the line of products comes in only one color. "Glue, nails and paints waste energy and interfere in the recycling process when the furniture is eventually dumped," he says.

Paper furniture is light - a 2-by-2-meter bookshelf weighs less than 10 kilograms. A common wooden bookshelf of the same size may weigh four times as much, Yao says.

Products are shipped semi-manufactured.

Cardboard by Homepaper is the best in the domestic market because of its bearing capacity and water resistance.

All the products are made by a local factory. But it took a long time to find a factory willing to receive the order.

"The investment is enough to make 1,000 of each product. Few factories will take on such small orders. This factory agreed to produce for us only because they had a personal interest in what we are doing," he says.

The prices may be a little high, but they still beat what many competitors are offering. "The average price of our products is around half or two-thirds what their counterparts might cost," he says.

Young customers

But Yin refuses to open a store for his brand. He did not even buy advertising space outside of a few displays in storefronts owned by friends.

That hasn't stopped the brand from developing a following.

"Most of them are well-educated young people or expats. They are more willing to buy artsy concept products. A few are just into sustainable living," he says.

Earlier this month a French couple bought one bookshelf for their child. "Since it has no formaldehyde, they thought it would be healthier for the child if he rubs it often," he says.

Consumers buy the boards and assemble them at home.

"It reduces carbon emissions during distribution. A truck can carry 30 to 40 of our paper bookshelves, but only one or two wooden ones," he says.

But function comes first. "There are a lot of products being marketed as safe for the environment, but they don't work in real life. We hope our products can be practical while conserving resources," he says.

Not cheap, but affordable

"Many people were expecting paper furniture to be quite cheap, but the raw materials cost more than what we hoped," he says.



What's in an English name?

By Han Manman

The often strange English names Chinese people take, and why, were an endless source of fascination for two Dutch authors during their work and study in Shanghai.

Their conclusions about what's in an English name come in a new 176-page book from Mark Batty Publisher: *In China, My Name Is ...* (\$19.95).

Researched, written and photographed by Valerie Blanco and Ellen Feberwee, two Dutch women who have since returned to Europe, the book documents 200 Chinese people and their reasons for selecting their English name.

Each explanation is accompanied by a full-page color photograph of the name's owner. Those interviewed include the young and old, the urbanite and the bumpkin. Apple, Henry, Molly, Phoenix and Zat are among the 200 names – some deeply personal, some random, some humorous – discussed in the book.

But even simple names often mask a complex selection process, Blanco said. For example, Ben in the Western world has biblical roots. But one Chinese Ben took the name from the Chinese word "ben," which means "stupid."

Another woman, Apple, selected her name because she always dresses in green and easily blushes. Molly named herself after Demi Moore's character in *Ghost*. Phoenix picked her name because she

adores both the bird whose spirit is said to never die and the American city that is home to her favorite basketball team.

"Of the people we interviewed, we loved Rubberpiky. It's a unique name

and he really thought about his reasons for taking it on. He chose to use this new identity that totally fits his character and work as a graphic designer in Shanghai," Blanco said.



Rubberpiky chose his name because he compares himself to a rubber band, which is "laid back" and "normal" but it can be extremely tense when you pull it. If you release the band it will bounce in every direction.

"Rubber band doesn't sound nice as a name. Therefore I chose Rubberpiky. Pixy comes from pixels," the man told the writers.

The names of famous people are other popular choices. The authors spoke to many Bills and Billys who wanted to become as famous and successful as Bill Clinton or Bill Gates.

For some people, an English name is just an unimportant tool for communication, the authors said. Anything will work, as long as it sounds good and is easy to remember.

But others take their English name as seriously as they do their Chinese counterpart, often seeking a meaning that fits their character or ambitions.

"We hope the book accurately shows some of the cultural changes taking place in China, and the differences between Chinese people and Chinese hopes and dreams," Blanco said.

"Having an English name shows that you are part of the new class in China: you probably went to university, can be considered fashionable or are expected to work as a high-paid 'white collar' in one of the large foreign multinationals."

Logic mystery the choice of young readers

By He Jianwei

Manga aside, the Japanese logic mystery is by far the favorite of China's young readers – especially the mysteries by bestselling author Soji Shimada.

Shimada, who visited Beijing last November for the Chinese release of *Jack the Ripper: One Hundred Years of Solitude* (310pp, Contemporary World Press, 30 yuan), returned last Friday for the release of *Vertigo* (448pp, New Star Press, 32 yuan) at the 2010 Beijing Book Fair.

Logic mysteries are a subgenre of detective fiction. Readers of the genre unravel the mystery on their own by processing the narrative rather than having the answers handed to them by a main character.

The writer made his debut as a novelist in 1981 when *The Tokyo Zodiac Murders* was nominated for the Rampo Edogawa Award. He challenged readers to solve gruesome mysteries in the book with clues buried in the text.

Its Chinese version, released last year on the mainland, has sold more than 50,000 copies. That success won him 15 other books a road into China.

Shimada's books combine mystery with a hearty dose of satire. Their themes lean toward confusion, youth, and survival. "No matter what the topic, Shimada's books are a great hit in the mainland market because of his focus on social problems," Chu Meng, an editor at New Star Press, said last Saturday.

Mysteries, which have a long tradition in Western literature, gained a new facet when Japanese writers took on the genre: technology. For Shimada and other Japanese writers, the breakneck pace of technological advancement provides rich fodder for mystery development.

"Vertigo is a novel explaining mysteries, not murders. The first part introduces the mysteries, and the later parts break them up and use science to explain them," Shimada said.



"Advanced science and technology keeps mystery stories fresh. A good novelist must follow the latest news and work it into his books," he said.

After spending years as a truck driver, musician and astrologist, Shimada turned to writing. "While I have never been a detective, that doesn't leave me short on inspiration," he said.

He has a habit of writing down new ideas in a notebook he carries at all times. His writing process begins with a review of those notes.

"Some of them might be useful while others are garbage. I don't think a writer can come up with a good story just by burying himself in meditation," he said.

Shimada, long regarded as Japan's "God of Mystery," has inspired and supported aspiring novelists in Japan and China. He used his profits to found two amateur mystery novel contests: the City of Roses Fukuyama Mystery Award in Japan and the Soji Shimada Logic Mystery Award in Taiwan.

Now Shimada is looking for writers on the mainland. "Many first prize winners at the International Mathematical Olympiad Contest are from China. I'm sure if Chinese writers take on the mystery genre, they will be its future," he said.

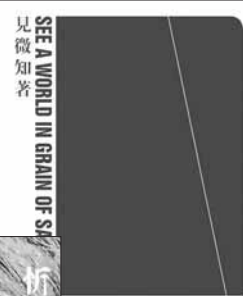
Timezone8 book listing

Timezone8 is a Hong Kong-based publisher, distributor and retailer of books on contemporary art, architecture, photography and design. This week, it lists three new titles for *Beijing Today* readers.

See a World in Grain of Sand

By Lu Hao and Zhao Li, 166pp, China Youth Press, \$50.00

Artist Lu Hao curated the China Pavilion at the 2009 Venice Biennale and selected for it artists both known and unknown outside China: Fang Lijun, Zeng Hao, He Sen, Qiu Zhijie, Liu Ding, Zeng Fanzhi and He Jinwei. The book records this unusual debut of artists who represent China's new generation of contemporary art.



Xin Haizhou

By Lu Peng, 171pp, Timezone8, \$60.00

Xin Haizhou's drawing-like figurative paintings portray youths looming from the frame with boggled eyes, slackened postures and expressions of dismay.



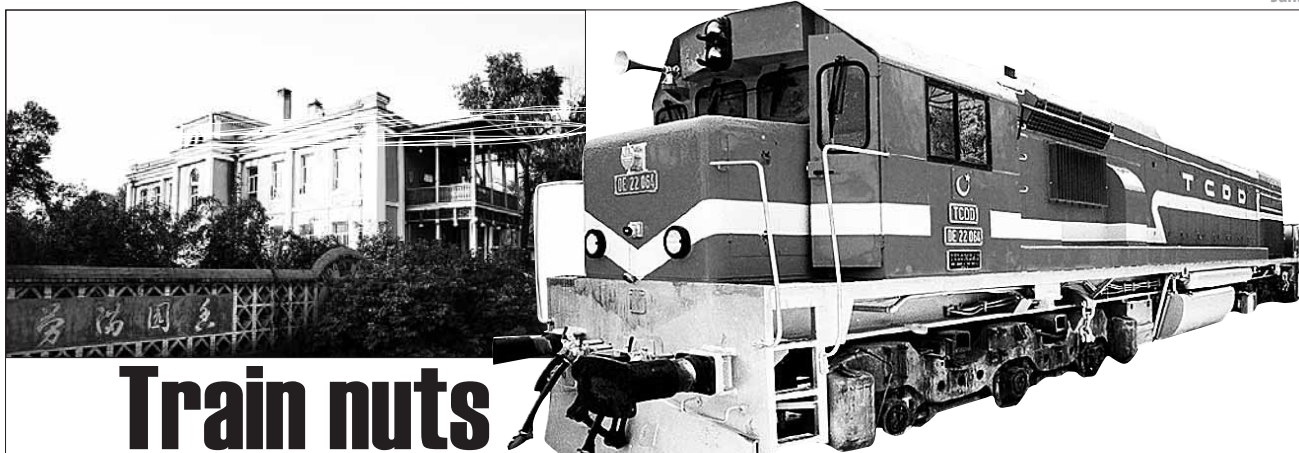
Stefan Banz: Sex, Mountains, Sunsets

By Stefan Banz, 148pp, Timezone8, \$40.00

Stefan Banz curated the Swiss pavilion at the 2005 Venice Biennale and founded Kunsthalle Luzern. He has had more than 10 solo shows in the last five years. SMS, his latest collection, is a tongue-in-cheek abbreviation for sex, mountains and sunsets. As the name suggests, the collection has couples kissing and lots of butts.

(By He Jianwei)





Train nuts stand up to save rails

By Wang Yu

Since the invention of the train, a love of the machine has passed to each new generation.

Many train lovers meet online to plan their next ride on the rails. Some get off at lost stops to explore the forgotten buildings of yesteryear.

But booming economies and an ever-hungry real estate industry threaten those scenic views. Even being listed as a national cultural heritage site offers little protection from advancing demolition crews. And so, a few train lovers have stepped up to play guardian.

An obsession begins

Yao Ji may be a boring bank clerk, but one passion has burned since his childhood: a passion for trains.

When Yao was a student at the Harbin Institute of Technology, he met people online who shared his obsession and joined a local train lovers club. Their regular outings put them on various rail lines to experience the pull of different engines.

They stayed mainly on sub tracks of the Zhongdong Railway, one of the biggest networks in the north. Built by the Russian Empire from 1896 to 1903, the network stretches from Manzhouli in the west to Dalian in the south. The Zhongdong Railway has more than 2,500 kilometers of tracks.

Yao and his friends have ridden every sub line over the past few years.

"I started in 2003. I loved everything about trains: the machine, the lines and the feeling of watching out the window. Usually, we got off at each small station to take photos of the nearby buildings and the train itself. Then we uploaded them to our forum," Yao says.

He and his friends played trainspotting at old stations, guessing which direction the train came from based on the sound of its engine.

After riding every line in Heilongjiang Province, Yao ventured south. The longest trip he ever took was from Heilongjiang to Yunnan Province. But Yao says the speed and convenience doesn't matter: he just wants to experience classic machines.

"Most of us don't pick the trains. Which we get depends on luck. But some train lovers have contacts in the local railway department and have access to the full table. Some know even more about the trains than the people who run the network," Yao says.

Their experiences often afford opportunities to work with the conductor. Train lovers and conductors are often close, and sometimes conductors hand over the controls when passing along safer tracks.

"The longest time I ever spent in control was during a short trip from Tianjin to Dezhou when I worked in Tianjin in 2008. The local train fans knew the conductor really well. Driving a train is easy: you just have to be alert and pay attention to how fast you are going and how much track you have left," Yao says.

Preserving the past

But everything changed in 2005 when Yao traveled with another train nut from Shenyang to Hengdaohezi, a town crossed by the Zhongdong Railway.

The town's old, Russian-style buildings stunned him. It was not the first time Yao faced such a historical treasure of history, but it was the moment he was jarred into a deeper level of fandom.

Those buildings were scheduled to be torn down as part of a real estate company's development plans.

Even the buildings outside the development area

have been abandoned. Once fancy villas home to the foreign rich were now used as flophouses by migrants and tramps. Though the facade retains its former prestige, the interiors have been gutted by impoverished residents passing through.

"Now the train fandom seems pointless. Taking pictures just to show them off? It was a waste of time. For the last two years, all I have focused on is how to save these old buildings that flank the rails," Yao says.

He joined a local volunteer team that protects relics in 2006. That year, he opened zdtl.net to call the attention of netizens to preserving these buildings. Despite the size of the country's train fandom, his new project has drawn only 20 volunteers: most of them are members of the International Council on Monuments and Sites's China department Yao included.

The work is too much for the casual fan.

Now Yao travels the rails with volunteers, recording the relics with their cameras before they can be destroyed. The photos are used for research. Buildings that are demolished are reported to the government in short briefs: the volunteers apply for cultural heritage status for whichever buildings remain.

"We usually travel between the big stations and the small ones. Sometimes we need cars to reach the abandoned stations. Many of the oldest stations have no roads, so we have to hike," Yao says.

Since early 2006, Yao spent three Spring Festival holidays on the rails.

But the effort requires more commitment than time alone: sometimes the volunteers face personal danger.

On June 30, 2006, Yao witnessed the dismantlement of the meteorological station on the Zhongdong Railway line. The real estate company hired thugs to keep the process in the dark and beat any witnesses. Even though the station, built in 1902, was a national cultural heritage site, the real estate company succeeded in its demolition.

"Most of the buildings we've recorded, such as the Manchuria Railway Bridge built in 1901, are still around. But the ones they've destroyed have been very precious," Yao says.

Together with Zeng Yizhi, a reporter known for her work as a cultural heritage protector and a railway expert, Yao applied for national cultural heritage protection for all buildings along the Zhongdong Railway network last year. The State Administration of Cultural Heritage helped bump the application deadline two weeks for their project.

"Local governments can hardly protect these old buildings when a powerful company wants them. More of them are in danger. That makes any preservation efforts difficult. But we don't want these views to live on only in old photos. Each house we save is one less thing the next generation will have to regret," Yao says.



Yao and his friends take pictures of scenery along the railway lines. The photos are passed on to the government department to appeal for protection.

Photos provided by Yao Ji



Beautiful Youth women's brogues, 235 yuan

By Wang Yu

This winter, the oxford snatched the title "shoes of the season" from canvas Converse sneakers and Dr. Martens. The oxfords, and their near-relative brogues, are a modern fashion classic that can set you apart from crowds similarly clad in double-breasted coats.

The shoes' price tag may cramp your style – if you don't know where to look. What goes for thousands of yuan in department stores is available for only hundreds online, courtesy of Chinese craftsmen and forward-looking young entrepreneurs.

Leather leads the way

Affordable classic Oxford and brogue shoes



Beautiful Youth men's brogues, 295 yuan

Introduction to a modern classic

Oxfords are a type of shoes laced over the instep. They were traditionally low-heeled, constructed of leather and were rather plain; over time they incorporated perforations and small designs. The shoes first appeared in Scotland and Ireland, where they were also known as balmorals.

In the US, the term balmoral is also used interchangeably with oxford. But in Britain, balmorals are a particular type of oxfords: one with no seams, apart from the toe cap, a style common in boots.

Brogues, more commonly known as wingtips in the US, have more detail and are less formal than oxfords. Made of heavy leather with low heels, they were originally worn by Scottish and Irish workers. Gradually they became fashionable men's country shoes and were mostly made in brown.

Inexpensive options online

Most oxfords and brogues available online look similar, so watch out for quality and cost. An increasing number of models are hand-made and are manufactured in Shanghai. But Tianjin, Beijing's neighboring port city, also has an operation producing the footwear run by Guo Xin.

Guo, a 23-year-old music promoter who frequently travels between Tianjin and Beijing, established his Beautiful Youth brand only last year. It was borne of his girlfriend's fashion needs; she saw them featured in street fashion photographs but could not find them in local stores.

"There were very few well-designed shoes. Mostly we found badly made ones where the outsoles were not sewed by hand but glued. So we decided to ask some cobblers for help," Guo says.

Cobblers are usually the last people

that 20-somethings will approach for fashion assistance. But Guo's background makes him different: he has relatives who used to be in the shoe-manufacturing industry, so he knew exactly where to go. He got in touch with experienced craftsmen – many in their 50s – who worked for years at local shoe factories that closed because of cheaper competition from the south.

Cobblers specialize in various phases of the production process: some create the designs, while others take charge of the cutting and sewing. Soon Guo found himself the boss of a shoe-production business.

With their artistry, craftsmanship and quality materials, the shoes sold out fast on Guo's Taobao store. The shoes' outsoles are made of leather instead of the more common rubber on similarly priced products. "Leather soles are more comfortable



Beautiful Youth men's oxfords, 295 yuan

in summer because of their increased breathability.

However, the soles also get wet more easily if you step on water," Guo says.

A pair of Beautiful Youth shoes takes at least 15 days to make; Guo's meticulous craftsmen only complete two pairs a day. Patience from customers is a must.

Beautiful Youth men:
shop58418259.taobao.com

Beautiful Youth women:
shop35857461.taobao.com



Beautiful Youth men's brogues boots, 445 yuan

Photos provided by Beautiful Youth

Caring for leather shoes

Care of leather shoes is not just about keeping your shoes looking good, but also about guaranteeing their long life.

1. Condition each new pair of leather shoes before wearing them. This will ensure they are well protected from the outset, and will save time on future cleaning.
2. Keep leather shoes away from water. If rain catches you outdoors, do not take the shoes off to protect them; shoes after all are made to protect the feet. Once you get home, place them in a well-ventilated area and let them dry naturally. Do not dry them near an electric fan, air conditioner or heater: this will only hasten their deterioration.
3. To protect them and keep them looking their best every day, follow these four steps: clean, condition, polish and preserve. Check out the Internet for details and for product recommendations.
4. Do not try to change the color of your shoes using shoe polish: this will ruin their fine finish. Instead consult a shoe repair shop.
5. When leather shoes, especially boots, are not going to be worn for a length of time, stuff them with balled up pieces of paper. This will help the shoes maintain their shape.



Other sources for oxfords and brogues

Vintage Round

This Shanghai-based online store offers hand-made leather shoes in a variety of colors. Note that some models have non-leather soles, but they also mean lower prices.

Web:

shop35916983.taobao.com

Laoshe Hand-made Shoes

This shop on Gulou Dong Dajie, the center of Beijing street fashion, is located beside music stores and trendy places. The small shop crammed full of shoes is owned by Laoshe, a quiet man who makes the products himself.

The advantage of being able to visit a shoe store is that you can have your shoes customized; there will be none of that pinching or gaping feeling with off-the-shelf models. The tradeoff is that you have to fork out more money. But the shoes are worth the price and are still cheaper than those found in department stores.

Where: 37 Gulou Dong Dajie, Dongcheng District
Open: 10 am – 6 pm
Tel: 6404 1406

Russian food to combat the cold



Cold sour fish, 28 yuan



Harbin dry sausage, 38 yuan



Red caviar, 58 yuan



Pickled melon, 16 yuan



Cheese, 58 yuan

Photos by Huang Xiao

By Annie Wei

If you agree there is nothing like Russian food to combat the cold, then it's good to acquaint yourself with Beijing's most popular Russian restaurants on the western part of town. They are located near state-run companies, which in the early years of the People's Republic magnetized many Russian-educated young Chinese.

This week we cast the spotlight on Little Birch Western Restaurant, located on the first floor of Jingbing Dasha, the office building of Heilongjiang Province's Harbin municipal government.

The restaurant offers traditional Russian dishes. Start with a bowl of Borsch (10 yuan) to warm the stomach. The soup is made with beef, cabbage, carrot, potato and beets, and is served with sour cream. Other options are mushroom soup and pumpkin soup (12 yuan each).

For appetizers, try the lightly pickled melon (16 yuan) or cold sour fish (28 yuan), which includes carrot, onion and tomato sauce. Cold dishes like Harbin dry sausage (38 yuan), sausage Harbin-style (28 yuan) and potato salad (12 yuan) are also good.

The restaurant serves free bread, which goes well with caviar or cheese. Double colors caviar (78 yuan) is red and black fish eggs. Black caviar is more expensive and is usually served on ice. Russians prefer to eat their caviar on a buttered toast. Toast with cheese (58 yuan), which has blueberry and cranberry, is popular with women diners.

Seafood and beef are Little Birch's featured main course. Mixed seafood au gratin (138 yuan) contains cold fish, shrimp, mussel and mushroom. Grilled lobster (398 yuan per 500 grams) includes cheese, onion and mushroom. Snails au gratin (39 yuan for six pieces) is prepared with tomato, vanilla and onion.

As for beef, there's beef steak imperial flavor (138 yuan), which comes with goose liver and wine sauce, and fried beef steam with fragrant sauce (128 yuan). The sauce is a choice of mushroom, red wine or black pepper.

For drinks, try Gewansi (30 yuan per pitcher, 10 yuan per glass), a Harbin specialty that is a cross between liquor and soft drinks and tastes like root beer. The restaurant makes strong milk tea that is 45 yuan a glass. At the end of their meal, customers get free ice cream or coffee.

For big groups who want privacy, the restaurant has VIP rooms, which is waives its overhead charge for orders that total more than 500 yuan.

Little Birch Western Restaurant

Where: 1/F Jingbing Dasha, 24 Fuchengmen Wai
Dajie, Xicheng District
Open: 8 am - 11 pm
Tel: 6858 2233 ext. 1666
Cost: About 80 yuan per person

Other established Russian restaurants

Qishilin

Opened in 1901, this restaurant is known for its authentic Russian menu, including Borsch and black caviar. Its Gewansi is home-made.

Where: 206 Hualong Shipin Jie, Nanheyuan Dajie, Dongcheng District
Open: 10 am - 2: 30 pm, 5:30-10:30 pm
Tel: 6559 7735

Volga Restaurant

This popular Russian restaurant is hidden inside the compound of the Beijing Exhibition Center.

Where: Beijing Exhibition Center Hotel, 135 Xizhimen Wai Dajie, Xicheng District
Open: 10 am - 10 pm
Tel: 6831 6633 ext. 7011

Weilanxi

One of the city's first exclusive restaurants, established in 1982, offers Russian dishes with a French twist. It boasts of having hosted foreign officials like former US President Richard Nixon. It has good deals like cream of mushroom soup (9 yuan) and T-bone steak (60 yuan).

Where: 75 Wanquanhe Lu, Haidian District
Open: 10 am - 10 pm
Tel: 6263 6026



Upper Room's interior

Bistro that offers music and books

By Zhang Dongya

Upper Room, a bistro-cum-live-music-venue, opened a roomier branch in Tibet Hotel last month. The new place, with its shelves of books, doubles as a reading corner.

It has 20 table-and-couch sets that can seat 160 people and is decorated with replicas of glass paintings by the Russian-born French painter Marc Chagall.

The Upper Room Rainbow Cafe and Bistro recommends its Ark of Noah (188 yuan), a meal for two to three persons made up of chicken wings, braised beef, lamb chops, pork ribs and vegetables.

It also offers set meals, priced from 28 to 42 yuan, like Mexican braised tendons (30 yuan), Indonesian curry chicken (28 yuan) and German braised beef fillet (35 yuan).

On its drinks list are coffee, tea, soft drinks, wines, cocktails and beers. A specialty is covenant of rainbow (28 yuan), a rack of 12 glasses of non-alcoholic drinks in six colors and flavors. All cocktails are 38 yuan, including Pink Lady, Sunrise and Mojitos.

The bistro has a large stage with a fully equipped sound system. Every evening starting at 8, either a local or a foreign band

takes the stage for a three-hour show. The stage is also available for rent on an hourly rate.

An amateur drama group named Hosanna performs during special occasions like Christmas and New Year's Day. It is scheduled to put on more shows on Easter and Thanksgiving.

During daytime the bistro welcomes book lovers and reading groups, who can use its collection of Chinese and English books. Upper Room welcomes book donations.

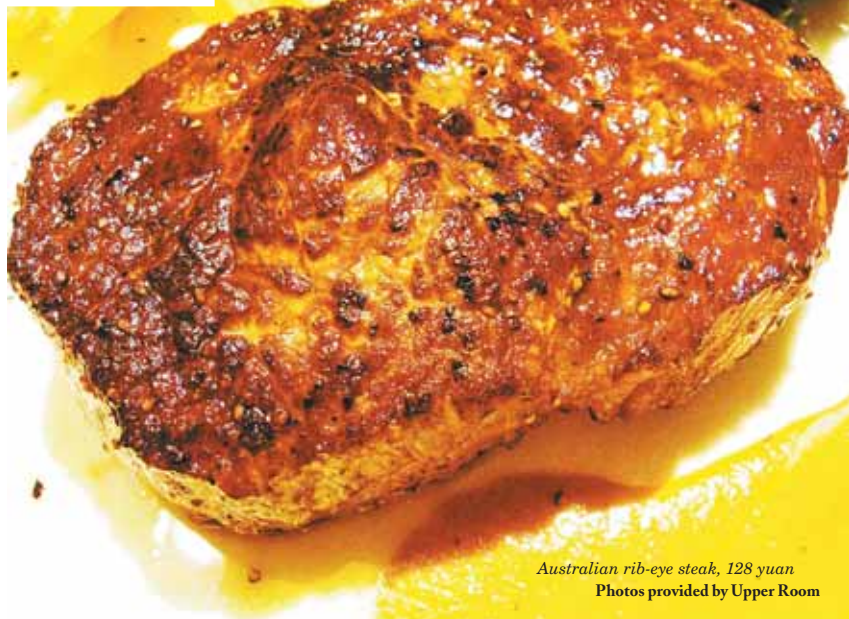
To celebrate its opening, the bistro is giving customers a 10-yuan coupon for every 50 yuan spent until January 22. And for a few weeks beginning tomorrow, it will also serve free snacks and drinks.

The original branch on Guanhua Road may be more homey, says owner Zhao Bingheng, an advertising executive from Hong Kong, but the new branch is more suitable for business meetings and formal get-togethers.

Upper Room Rainbow Cafe Bistro

Where: 1/F Building B, Tibet Hotel, 118 Beisihuan Dong Lu, Chaoyang District

Open: 10:30 am - midnight
Tel: 6498 1133 ext. 2221



Australian rib-eye steak, 128 yuan

Photos provided by Upper Room

Truths and lies within marriage

By He Jianwei

To lie or not to lie, that is the question for many married men.

They're not sure whether honesty is the best policy when it comes to dealing with women, whom they regard as capricious. Some people say a woman's intuition is too strong of a lie detector. Others say lying can save you a lot of trouble.

I Don't Want to Sing Alone, on stage at Fengchao Theater next week, is a new drama that shows how a married couple deals with the problem of a third party. A closet stool designer, whose wife is a gynecologist, falls in love with a paper company sales manager who brings back sizzle into his life. The husband is torn between romance and responsibility to his family.

When the two women meet one night, the war begins.

Before the 1980s, Chinese people considered extramarital love immoral, an abandonment of one's obligations. People involved in affairs felt guilty for putting their emotions ahead of their responsibilities.

Over the years society's attitude has become more liberal: many think that when romance disappears from a marriage, the responsibility of staying together becomes an unbearable burden.

The play does not make moral judgments on extramarital affairs; rather it discusses different attitudes toward it from the points of view of a husband, a wife and a mistress.

"Will a person demand a divorce without hesitation when a third party appears? Do people prefer that their partner tell the truth or a lie when he or she falls in love with someone else? I hope viewers get their answers in the play," the executive producer Zhang Weiwei said.

I Don't Want to Sing Alone

Where: Fengchao Theater, 12 Dongzhimen Wai Dajie, Dongcheng District

When: January 20-31, daily except Monday and Tuesday, 7:30 pm

Admission: 100-250 yuan, 50 yuan for students

Tel: 6415 7332



5 Friday, January 15

Exhibition **Image as Still Life**

Where: Mi Space, 51 Fangjia Hutong, Dongcheng District
When: Until February 6, daily, 1:30-8 pm
Tel: 6405 5477

New Language in Sculptures – Group exhibition of sculptors born after 1970

Where: New Age Gallery, 798 Art District, 2 Jiuxianqiao Lu, Chaoyang District
When: Until January 31, daily except Monday, 10 am – 6 pm
Admission: Free
Tel: 5978 9282

Nightlife

Music Stories of 12 Months

Where: Weibozhiyan Club, Room 2308, 3/F North Building, SOHO Shangdu, 8 Dongdaqiao Lu, Chaoyang District
When: 9 pm
Admission: 40 yuan

Tel: 5900 0969

Shanren

Where: Jianghu Bar, 7 Dongmianhua Hutong, Jiaodaokou Nan Dajie, Dongcheng District
When: 9:30 pm
Admission: 50 yuan
Tel: 6401 4611



Ashura Live in Beijing

Where: Mao Livehouse, 111 Gulou Dong Dajie, Dongcheng District
When: 8 pm
Admission: 50 yuan
Tel: 6402 5080

6 Saturday, January 16

Exhibition **Asian Landmark**

Where: Iberia Center for Contemporary Art, 798 Art District, 4 Jiuxianqiao Lu, Chaoyang District
When: Until February 28, daily except Monday, 10 am – 6 pm
Admission: Free
Tel: 5978 9030

It is Not Sculpture

Where: Linda Gallery, 798 Art District, 2 Jiuxianqiao Lu, Chaoyang District
When: Until March 20, daily except Monday, 10 am – 6 pm
Admission: Free
Tel: 8459 9235

Movie

Jane B. par Agnes V.
Where: Lady Book Saloon, 69 Chengfu Lu, Haidian District
When: 7 pm
Admission: Free
Tel: 6270 1928

My Life Without Me

Where: Lele Bar (50 meters east of Communication Uni-

versity of China's north gate), Dingfuzhuang, Chaoyang Lu, Chaoyang District
When: 7 pm
Admission: Free
Tel: 6576 5987

Nightlife

DJ Krush

Where: Yugongyishan, 3-2 Zhangzizhong Lu, Dongcheng District
When: 9 pm
Admission: 60 yuan advance purchase, 80 yuan at the door
Tel: 6404 2711

Hoochie Coochie Gentleman Band

Where: Zuiyuefang, 18 Andingmen Xi Dajie, Dongcheng District

When: 9:30 pm
Tel: 6405 4482

Rise of the Metal Power

Where: 13 Club, 161 Lanqiyang, Chengfu Lu, Haidian District
When: 9 pm
Admission: 40 yuan before 9 pm, 50 yuan after
Tel: 8261 9267

Upcoming

Nightlife

Pet Conspiracy

Where: Yugongyishan, 3-2 Zhangzizhong Lu, Dongcheng District
When: 10:30 pm
Admission: 60 yuan advance purchase, 80 yuan at the door
Tel: 6404 2711

Stage in February

Concert

New Year's Ode to Joy – Song Fei Erhu Recital

Where: Concert Hall of the National Center for the Performing Arts, 2 Xi Chang'an Jie, Xicheng District
When: February 2, 7:30 pm
Admission: 80-580 yuan
Tel: 6655 0000

Lü Siqing Violin Recital

Where: Concert Hall of the National Center for the Performing Arts, 2 Xi Chang'an Jie, Xicheng District
When: February 26, 7:30 pm
Admission: 80-500 yuan
Tel: 6655 0000

Dance

Sound of Yunnan

Where: Poly Theater, 14 Dongzhimen Nan Dajie, Dongcheng District
When: February 3-5, 7:30 pm
Admission: 180-1,280 yuan
Tel: 6551 8058

Lar Lubovitch Dance Company China Premiere – Mixed Bill I

Where: Theater of the National Center for the Performing Arts, 2 Xi Chang'an Jie, Xicheng District
When: February 3-6, 7:30 pm
Admission: 80-580 yuan
Tel: 6655 0000

The Lady of the Camellias Ballet

Where: Opera House of the National Center for the Performing Arts, 2 Xi Chang'an Jie, Xicheng District
When: February 3-8, 7:30 pm
Admission: 180-1,080 yuan
Tel: 6655 0000

Irish Tap Dance Riverdance Beijing Tour 2010

Where: Beijing Exhibition Theater, 135 Xizhimen Wai Dajie, Xicheng District
When: February 5-11, 7:30 pm
Admission: 180-2,000 yuan
Tel: 6831 6633

Celtic Legends – Irish Tap Dance

Where: Poly Theater, 14 Dongzhimen Nan Dajie, Dongcheng District
When: February 6-8, 7:30 pm
Admission: 80-880 yuan
Tel: 6551 8058

Sleeping Beauty, Nutcracker and Swan Lake by the Russian National Ballet Theater

Where: Poly Theater, 14 Dongzhimen Nan Dajie, Dongcheng District
When: February 16-20, 7:30 pm
Admission: 50-1,000 yuan
Tel: 6551 8058

(By Jackie Zhang)

7 Sunday, January 17

Movie **Rebecca**

Where: China Film Archive, 3 Wenhuiyuan Lu, Xiaoxitian, Haidian District
When: 1 pm
Admission: 30 yuan
Tel: 8229 6153

Nightlife

Beijing Music Carnival

Where: Olympic Sports Center Gymnasium, 1 Anding Lu, Chaoyang District
When: 2 pm (concert starts 7 pm)
Admission: Free
Tel: 6491 2143

Goodbye UFO – a 3D acrobatic musical

Where: Beijing Exhibition Center

Theater, 135 Xizhimen Wai Dajie, Xicheng District

When: 7:30 pm
Admission: 80-1,280 yuan
Tel: 6406 8888

Night of Ballads – Zhang Guonian and Piper Lee

Where: D-22, 242 Chengfu Lu, Haidian District
When: 9 pm
Admission: 30 yuan, 20 yuan for students
Tel: 6265 3177

Exhibition

Super Generation @ Taiwan

Where: Today Art Museum, Building 4, Pingod Community, 32 Baizhuan Lu, Chaoyang District

When: Until February 12, daily except Monday, 10 am – 6 pm

Admission: 20 yuan, 10 yuan for students
Tel: 5876 9804



(By He Jianwei)



Picking safe toys for toddlers

By Li Zhixin

Playtime may give mom a breather from the daily grind of child rearing, laundry, dishes and dinner, but be careful that whatever toys you give your child are not home to any hidden dangers.

Toys may contain feminizing chemicals

Phthalates, a common chemical found in plastics, may be contributing to the abnormal growth of breasts in boys, preliminary research suggests.

Previous studies found this commonly used plastic chemical shortened pregnancies, damaged the liver and kidneys and disrupted hormone levels. But a new study found that pregnant women who had high levels of phthalates in their blood produced boys more inclined to play with girls' toys.

In the new study, Turkish researchers tested 40 boys recently diagnosed with gynecomastia — breast enlargement — and 21 boys who did not have the condition. The levels of phthalates-related substances in their blood were 2.8 to 25 times higher in the boys with enlarged breasts, said the researchers, who published their findings in the January issue of the journal *Pediatrics*.

Phthalates are found in a number of products including children's toys, shower curtains, paints, building materials, furniture, clothing, dentures, cleaning materials, insecticides, food containers, plastic wraps, adhesives, certain medical devices and pharmaceuticals. They also are found in many perfumes, hair sprays, liquid soaps and other personal-care products.

Studies have shown that phthalates accumulate in tissues, leading researchers to believe their effects increase with age.

The Turkish study correlates with other studies showing that phthalates may be feminizing boys at an alarming rate. Researchers think phthalates might mimic the activity of estrogen. One positive finding from the Turkish study is that high phthalate levels were not linked to decreased testosterone, which other researchers speculated was how they affected male reproductive organs.

But the findings are not conclusive that phthalates directly causes gynecomastia. Researchers aren't sure why enlarged breasts develop in boys, said study co-author Dr. Elif Ozmert of Hacettepe University in Ankara, Turkey. The study found that up to 65 percent of teenage boys develop enlarged breasts.

Pending a clearer link, the researchers are advising consumers to limit their exposure to phthalates by avoiding the use of plastic cups and food coverings, particularly for hot foods, and steering clear of plastic toys and unnecessary cosmetics.

Frequent hand washing may also limit contamination.



How to choose toys for kids

Dangerous toys are everywhere; millions are recalled. Safe toys are absolutely crucial for the health and wellness of children. "There's been a lot of hue and cry about toxic and unsafe toys which have been endangering our children's health," Bu Weiping, the vice chairman of the China Toy Association, said. "Choosing safe toys is simply a matter of being informed. It is very important for every parent to be aware of dangerous and prohibited chemicals found in toys which could pose a hazard to children."

Here are a few pointers which should help you to choose safe toys.

1. Bisphenol A: BPA is a chemical commonly found in toys, baby and children's products. "BPA has proved to be related with breast cancer, obesity, attention deficit disorder and hyperactivity. So choose BPA-free toys and plastic goods," Bu said. "One way of checking this is to look for the number on the bottom, within the recycling arrows. Avoid products with the numbers 3, 6 and 7." Also avoid clear plastic bottles and products unless certified BPA free.

2. Lead: Lead is a poisonous chemical. Toys and jewelry containing lead and lead-based paint are dangerous because they expose children to the heavy metal. Children tend to mouth toys and small objects, and some amount of lead may end up in the body if they are exposed to objects with excessive levels.

"Exposure to lead can have a wide range of effects on a child's development and behavior. Even

when exposed to small amounts of lead, children may appear inattentive, hyperactive and irritable. Children with greater lead levels may also have problems with learning and reading, delayed growth and hearing loss. At high levels, lead can cause permanent brain damage and even death," he said.

3. Magnets: Check toys for magnets. If two or more magnets or magnetic components or a magnet and another metal object — such as a small metal ball — are swallowed separately, they can attract to one another through intestinal walls. "This traps the magnets and can cause perforations, twisting or blockage of the intestines, infection, blood poisoning and even death. When multiple magnets are ingested, surgery is required to remove the magnets and sometimes sections of the intestines need to be removed," he said.

Magnets encased within a heavy-duty material that cannot be chewed or splintered are safe.

4. Small, detachable parts: Most unsafe toys have small parts that can be detached and ingested. Check all toys for loose or small parts which you feel may be dangerous to your kids. If you want to be sure you are choosing a safe toy, either remove the part

from the toy, or take the toy away. **5. Loud toys:** Loud toys are unsafe for a child's hearing. Exposure to constantly high levels of noise can reduce one's hearing capacity. "One solution is to stick some tape or a bandage over the speaker to muffle the noise," he said.

6. Ridable toys: Ridable toys result in the most injuries. Make sure children wear appropriate safety gear, including helmets and pads, when playing with rideable toys.

7. Projectile: Younger children who horse around with projectiles, like air rockets and darts, can sustain or cause serious injuries, especially to the eyes.

8. Age appropriate: Safe toys are synonymous with age-appropriate toys. It is not safe for children to play with toys that are meant for their elder peers. This is especially true where infants and toddlers are concerned.



Tips for parents

1. Quickly take recalled toys away from your children.
2. As toys are played with, dropped and thrown, they begin to fragment. Inspect your child's toys from time to time and dispose of those with sharp edges that could cause lacerations or with loose strings that could be strangulation hazards.
3. Watch your children while they are playing.
4. Discourage children from putting toys in their mouths. Keep all small round toys like marbles and small balls out of reach.
5. Avoid toys that have large cords or strings attached. Children tend to wrap the strings around things — their own necks included. Teach children to put their toys away to avoid trip hazards.



CFP Photo

Jilin's crystal trees

One of the Four Wonders seen only in winter

By Zhang Dongya

With lows of -15 C, this is Beijing's coldest winter in 40 years. But if you really want to test your tolerance for freezing temperatures, head northeast to the coldest region.

One of the Jilin City's winter attractions is the riverside row of crystallized trees, considered one of China's Four Wonders along with Huangshan Mountain's sea of clouds, the tidal waves in Qiantang River and Taishan Mountain's view of sunrise.

Frosted trees by the river

Miles of ice-coated trees along Jilin's Songhua River draws hundreds of tourists every winter. The ice coating, locally called *wusong* or *shugua*, forms when supercooled water droplets in fog come in contact with a surface that is also at a temperature below freezing; the droplets are so small they freeze almost instantly upon contact with the object.

Jilin is also known as "river city," a name given by Kangxi Emperor, the second ruler of the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911), who enjoyed sailing on the Songhua during his inspections. The river, which follows an S-shaped course through urban areas, has warm water even in winter and produces fog.

Fengman Power Station, located by Songhua River, built a dam that has formed an artificial lake nicknamed Frost Lake for being host to frosted trees. In winter, the lake's surface turns to ice at least a meter thick, but the water underneath



Sunset in Zengtongtun Island

remains at 4 C due to activity by the power station's turbines. This raises the water temperature, which practically guarantees fog year-round. Sometimes the fog enveloping the river is so thick it obscures approaching boats.

With the fog and Jilin's frigid winters – temperatures can fall as low as -25 C – it is no surprise the area is home to an icy wonderland. Temperatures this year have plummeted to -30 C.

Some tree frosting is as thick as 60 millimeters, eight times thicker than that found in other areas. The scenery is best appreciated from the dam along the riverbank. A photography area has also been set up on the bank.

The spectacle can usually be observed between late November and early February on 24 days each winter, according to local weather station records. It is most frequently seen in January for 9 days.

The frost typically begins to form after 1 am and continues through the early hours of the morning. It often disappears with the bright noontime sun and strong winds. The local media report if frost is expected to form the following day, based on fog levels.

Continued on page 21...



Ferries can take visitors and their cars from island to island.



Zengtongtun, about an hour from downtown, is a popular spot to see crystallized trees.



Crystallized trees on Jifeng Dong Lu in downtown Jilin
Photos by Lin Haizhong

... continued from page 20



Farmers on Hantun Island open their homes to visitors who want to stay overnight.



Tourists who don't have time to make a trip to Frost Lake can see the frosted trees from downtown.

Travel Tips

1. People who don't have time to make a trip to Frost Lake can still see the ice-coated trees from downtown. Recommended spots are Ashi, Jifeng Dong Lu, Songjiang Zhong Lu and Beida Hu. Monitor news reports for the latest weather information.
2. You can get to Frost Lake on a bus from downtown. Catch the bus at Chalu Xiang, which costs 6 yuan each way.
3. Hantun and Zengtongtun islands are inhabited by farmers, who open their homes to tourists who want to stay overnight.

Favorable winter for ice sighting

Lin Haizhong, a Jilin native who has been photographing the ice-coated trees for 10 years, says January is the best time to see them. "And this year has produced the best ice crystals because of the heavy snowfall and huge temperature difference between day and night times," he says.

This winter Jilin has recorded temperatures of -16 to -20 C during daytime and -25 to -30 C at night.

To know when there will be action, Lin monitors TV news reports and local travel websites. "You don't see frost every day. Once, some tourists from Beijing waited for four days but had to leave in vain," he says.

Ice formation is also affected by humidity, wind velocity, air pressure and snow.

"Once, a TV report said the possibility of crystallization the next day was 60 to 70 percent, so I prepared to take pictures. But I discovered snow the next day, so I cancelled it. Ice on trees disappears when there's snow," he says.

Locals who hope to catch the marvel usually follow a three-step procedure. First, they observe the evening fog to see how thick and expansive it gets. The bigger the fog is, the greater the probability of ice crystals the next day. A favorable sign is if fog cloaks buildings, street lights and trees along the river. Urban areas take on mysterious, dreamy character.

Next, locals check out the riverside trees between 9 and 11 am the next day. When the sun hits frosted trees, willow branches resemble silver bands and pine trees look like white chrysanthemums.

Last, they wait for the trees to shed their icy covering. It starts little by little, then gains strength until strings of ice fall from the trees, swaying in the wind, some landing on the body.

Islands as vantage point

There are several islands within Songhua River, the biggest of which are Hantun and Zengtongtun – the best places to see frosted trees, as they have the most favorable conditions for crystallization and the trees there grow in different shapes and sizes.

Zengtongtun is about an hour from downtown, while Hantun is a 10-minute boat ride from Zengtongtun. No bridge connects the islands to the mainland, so visitors need to take a boat. Ferries regularly make the trip and can take cars. Tickets cost 20 yuan per person and 50 yuan per car. But as in every small town, you can bargain to bring the car's ticket down to 30 yuan.



Jilin's crystal trees is one of China's Four Wonders.
Photos by Lin Haizhong

Dining



So romantic

Enjoy a romantic and memorable evening with a five-course dinner created by head chef Yannick Ehrsam. Bring your lover to France for the evening.

Where: Sofitel Wanda Beijing, 93 Jianguo Lu, Chaoyang District

When: February 14

Cost: 1,588 yuan dinner for two with wine

Tel: 8599 6666



Reunions and Lantern Festival repasts

Seven set menus featuring Cantonese specialties are on offer with highlights such as Suckling Pig Combination and Braised Shark's Fin Soup with Shredded Abalone and Sea Cucumber. Make this reunion even more memorable with a complimentary family photo and lucky draw.

Our Lantern Festival set menus

are specials for this Year of the Tiger. Perfectly round sesame and chrysanthemum-filled *tangyuan* highlight two specially prepared set menus of 12 dishes.

Where: The Horizon, Shangri-La's Kerry Centre, 1 Guanghua Lu, Chaoyang District

When: Until February 28

Tel: 6561 8833 ext. 41

Chinese New Year festive offer

Say farewell to the year of the Ox and welcome another marvelous year of the Tiger at the Grand Millennium Beijing with this irresistible deal.

Where: Grand Millennium Beijing, Fortune Plaza, 7 Dongsanhuan Zhong Lu, Chaoyang District

When: February 4-28

Cost: 600 yuan (15 percent surcharge) per room per night for super-size superior room; add 88 yuan for daily breakfast for one; add 168 yuan for daily breakfast for two

Tel: 6530 9383

Sizzling soba and udon

For those who like their meals hot, Homemade Sizzling Soba and Udon noodles at The Silk Road Trattoria Restaurant of The Great Wall Sheraton Hotel Beijing is a super choice. These delicious and healthy noodles served on a sizzling red-hot steel plate will keep you warm till the last bite.

Where: The Great Wall Sheraton Hotel Beijing, 10 Dongsanhuan Bei Lu, Chaoyang District

When: February 1-28
Tel: 6590 5566 ext. 2117



Valentine's Day

A day of romance where East meets West. Crowne Plaza Beijing Zhongguancun invites you to celebrate this Valentine's Day with your loved one over a romantic candlelight dinner. This special set dinner for two includes sumptuous cuisine and a heart-warming melting chocolate cake dessert.

Where: Crowne Plaza Beijing Zhongguancun, 106 Zhichun Lu, Haidian District

Tel: 5993 8888

Australia Day party

Celebrate Australia Day at 12SQM on Nanluogu Xiang with 15 yuan Coopers from noon until midnight. Imported Coopers Ale and Stout is available for 15 yuan. There are also 100 percent Australian Beef pies for 35 yuan and Australian music all through the day.

Where: 12SQM Bar & Cafe, 1 Fuxiang Hutong, Nanluogu Xiang, Xicheng District
Tel: 6402 1554



Ring in the Year of the Tiger

There is no better way to ring in Chinese New Year than in the bustling surrounds of Hilton Beijing's award-winning restaurant Elements. Celebrate the season with your family, friends and colleagues by feasting on a special commemorative New Year's buffet. Indulge in a sumptuous Chinese-themed meal of the freshest ingredients. Enjoy and auspicious New Year with festive favorites and much more.

Where: Elements, Hilton Beijing, 1 Dongfang Lu, Chaoyang District

When: February 8-13

Cost: 158 yuan per person (lunch), 208 yuan per person (dinner) 15 percent surcharge

Tel: 5865 5020

Hotel

New General Manager at Kempinski

Stephan Interthal was appointed general manager of the Kempinski Hotel Beijing Lufthansa Center. With 30 years in the hospitality industry, Stephan brings a wealth of experience. He has managed the Kempinski Hotel Corvinus Budapest, Kempinski Vier Jahreszeiten Munich and the Hotel Adlon Kempinski Berlin. His quest for impeccable service is expected to take the prestigious Beijing property from good to best.

Shangri-La Hotels and Resorts Spring Festival package

To celebrate Chinese New Year, Shangri-La Hotels and Resorts is

offering a Spring Festival package to residents of China: Hong Kong, Macau and Taiwan included. The package is available between February 10 and 28. Guests get a free daily buffet breakfast with complimentary buffets at all meals during their stay for children 18 or younger. Hotel souvenirs are available for children and extra beds are available for additional guests. Check out as late as 6 pm. As a perk, Air China will double your frequent flier miles if you book two or more nights.

Gloria Hotels growing fast

Gloria Hotels and Resorts is accelerating its development with the following new projects: Gloria Grand Hotel Hohhot (209 rooms), Gloria Grand Hotel Changsha (372 rooms), Gloria Plaza Hotel Wuxi (184 rooms), Gloria Plaza Hotel Chongqing (160 rooms) and Kolam Gloria Plaza Hotel Hefei (209 rooms).

As a local hotel management company with 20 years' experience, Gloria is recognized for its professional management team, clear brand classification and excellent reputation.

China World Hotel meets new int'l food safety standard

China World Hotel, Beijing, has stepped up to food safety management. The new guidelines from Shangri-La Hotels and Resorts bring the hotel up to meeting international food safety requirements by becoming the first Shangri-La hotel on the mainland with an ISO22000 kitchen team. The team, from Moody International, successfully passed stringent audits for HACCP (Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point) re-certification.

Aviation

Jetstar and AirAsia form first low-cost alliance

Jetstar and AirAsia announced January 6 that they would form a new alliance to reduce costs, pool expertise and ensure cheaper fares on both carriers. The alliance brings together Asia Pacific's leading low-cost, low-fare carriers to ensure cheap flights for the region's customers.

The agreement includes new cooperation in areas such as future fleet specifications, airport passenger and ramp handling services and shared aircraft parts.



Tourism

Epiphany

On the stroke of January 6, the "12 days" of Christmas officially came to an end. This day took on a special meaning in Greece. There was a special ceremony to bless the waters and the vessels that ply them.

In the modern observance at Piraeus, the ancient port of Athens, a priest hurls a large crucifix into the waters. After that, young men brave the cold and compete to retrieve it. The cross today is attached to a safety chain, just in case the year's divers are not the most skilled.

(By Sun Feng)

Chinglish story

This column focuses on Chinglish mistakes in our daily life. If you have any experiences to share, send them to Wang Yu at wangyu2008@ynet.com.

A fish story on dry land

By Li Zhixin

Last month I visited my uncle's home and walked in on him having a fight with his 35-year-old son Jason. My uncle discovered that Jason, who is single and still financially dependent, has been making huge purchases on his credit card without his father's approval. My uncle was giving Jason a blistering lecture, trying to put an end to his uncontrollable spending. Meanwhile my aunt, who has always spoiled Jason, was trying to placate her husband.

Jason has been vain and arrogant as far back as I can remember. He likes designer clothes, expensive restaurants and flashy cars even though he has not earned any cent that he spends.

He kept making excuses why he could not get a job after college. When he gets short on cash, he borrows money from clueless friends by making up stories about a personal emergency. He has paid back very few and many learned not to trust him next time. I am one of these people.

But some guys would not let the debt go and approached my uncle about it. My uncle felt humiliated and had no choice but to pay back the men.

When I entered their house, Jason was shouting at his father, blaming the man for his "dismal life." My uncle was livid and ordered Jason to move out the following month. "I hope this finally teaches you the value of money and hard work!" he said.

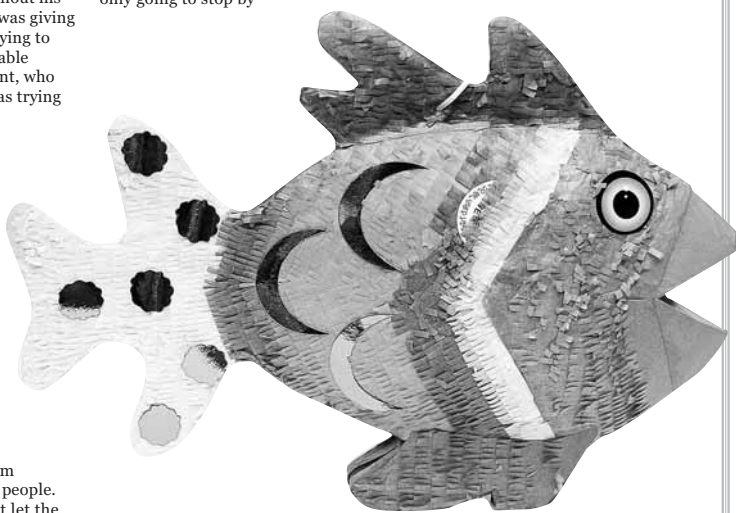
Jason burst out of the house, the door slamming shut behind him. My aunt went hysterical and pleaded with

my uncle to bring back her son.

Last weekend I chanced upon Jason in a restaurant. He was having dinner with friends and was heavily flirting with two women. When he saw me, he got up and crossed the room. I thought he was only going to stop by

ATM card at home," I said. We both knew I was lying, but I did not care. Jason walked back to his table with a red face.

When I got home, I told my mother about the encounter. I was



to say hello; the last thing I expected was for him to borrow money.

"My girlfriend's sick and I need to take her to the hospital, but I don't have enough cash," he said. "Can I borrow a thousand yuan? I promise I'll pay you back in a few days."

I've heard a variation of this story a number of times and thought my hard-earned money was likely going to end up spent in the bar on his female companions. "I don't have enough cash with me and I left my

surprised by her sharp retort: "Why didn't you lend him any money? Maybe he really needed to bring his girlfriend to the hospital. Plus, he's a family member."

"Mom, I've been through this before. Trust me, it sounded exactly like a fish story," I said.

"How was it a fish story?" she said.

"Mom, a fish story is not a story about fish. It means a story that does not sound trustworthy or truthful," I said.

Blacklist

This is a column of words or phrases commonly misused by Chinese speakers. If you're planning to be an English teacher, reporter or employee of a multinational company, then watch out for this page each week.

1. Gentle in manner

Professor Zhu Shida (ZS): For idiomatic English, it should be "gentle of manner" instead of "gentle in manner." We say: He is gentle of manner, or He is well-mannered. We have an example here: He is so gentle of manner and speaks in such whispers that one struggles to imagine him professing love without shyness to his own wife. Here, "of" means having to do with; in regard to; concerning; about. For instance, He has encountered problems that are so difficult of solution that he has almost lost heart. Similarly we have such samples as: hard of hearing; short of stature; swift of foot; hard of heart.

Native speaker Steven Sandor (SS): As a native speaker, "in manner" sounds far more natural to my ears than "of manner." Google would seem to agree, returning more than 400,000 matches for "gentle in manner" and 80,000 for the "of manner" variant. A quick scan through e-books also shows Jacob Abbot, a 19th century American author of children books, writing "gentle in manner, but inflexibly firm in act." Consider other examples such as "beautiful in soul."

2. Barriers for national buildup

ZS: The idiomatic combination with "barrier" is "to," not "for." The Chinese are fairly prone to committing this error. We say: He pinpoints the barriers to any speedy buildup of Afghan's national army and police. Similarly, we have: home to; host to; impediment to, etc. For example, This city was host to 55,000 visitors last year. You will never say: This city was host for 55,000 visitors. I cite another example for you: The new taxes were an impediment to economic growth.

SS: The professor is correct. This fragment uses the wrong preposition, unless the writer actually means the barriers serve to facilitate "national buildup."

3. twenty-somethings

ZS: We previously discussed in this column the English usage of people in their twenties: in their 20's; or 20-year-olds. Now, we have an informal, and yet increasingly prevalent, expression of this idea: something with a prefix of the number you wish to express, which denotes people in a given range of age, for instance, we have twenty-something which indicates people in their 20's. Though the word itself is a collective noun, it does have a plural form. For instance, we have "twenty-somethings" in this sentence here: She stepped onto the empty dance floor and gave the crowd of tipsy twenty-somethings and cigar-chomping businessmen her best come-hither stare.

SS: As offensive-sounding as it may be, this is now common English. You could similarly refer to forty-somethings who are in their mid-life crises or eighty-somethings with one foot in the grave. However, I would remind that "20's" is incorrect in its use of the possessive apostrophe. The digits stand in for the word "twenty" with a plural s on the end. You would never write "I own 20 CD's" where the C and D stand for compact disc: compare with "My CD's cover is scratched." This is an extremely common error made by all levels of writers. Remember that the apostrophe stands in for missing letters, such as the a and d in "rock 'n' roll" or the 19 in "the roaring '20s".

Chinglish on the way

This column aims to identify Chinglish in public areas. If you see any Chinglish signs, please send a picture of it to wangyu2008@ynet.com together with your name and address.

Be disinfected

By Tiffany Tan

You're either going to be insulted by this restaurant's haughty attitude or you're going to be pleased it's taking great pains to maintain hygiene. With swine flu AH1/N1 a global health threat, we cannot be too careful, right?

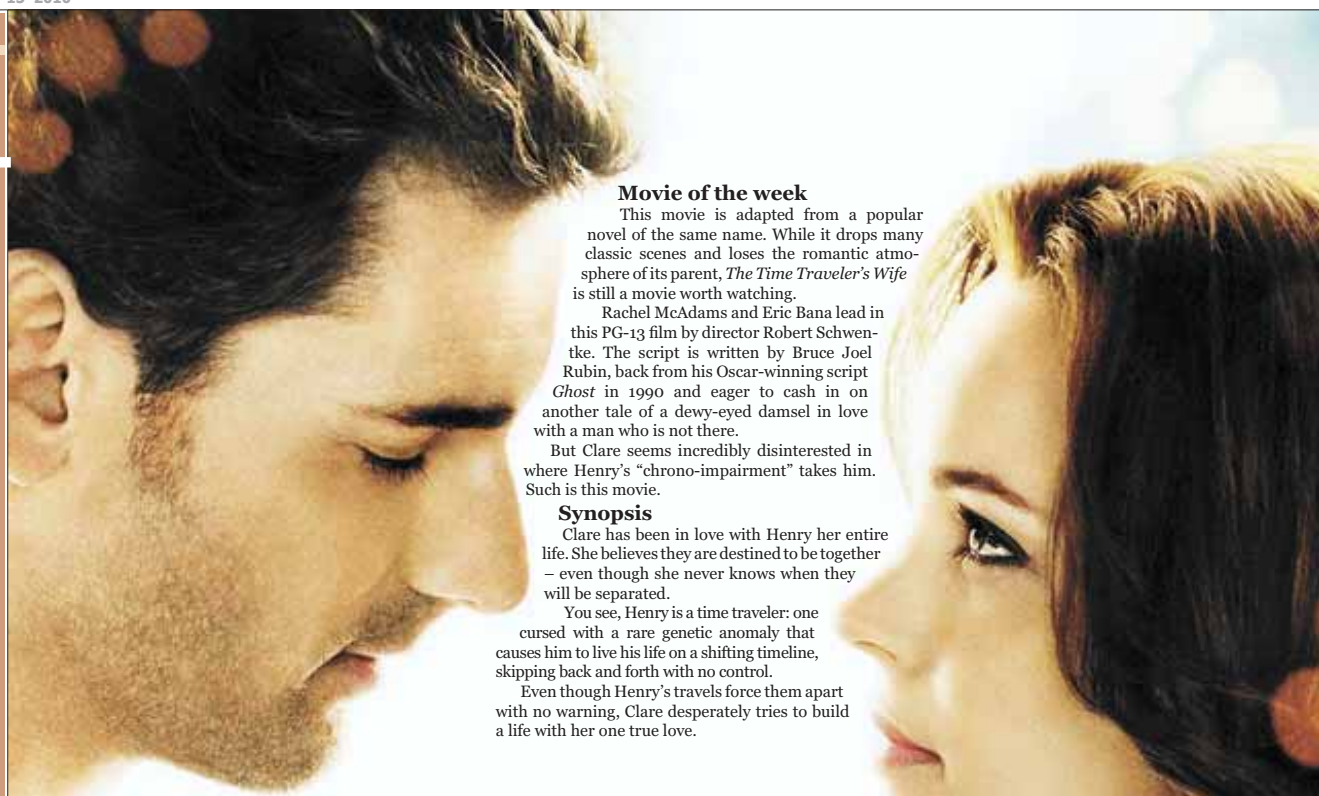
But what exactly is involved in disinfecting diners? Asking them to wash their hands before handling the tableware, spraying them with disinfectant before showing them to their tables, or zapping



them with germ-killing powerful light rays? Stranger things have happened.

In this case, only the sign is strange. Before we get carried away by our overactive imagination, we realize the Chinese words only say, "the tableware has been disinfected." The word "sterilized" can also be used instead of "disinfected."

I guess people can enter the restaurant and order without going through a pre-meal drill. Now the sign is boring. How about we find an interesting science-fiction film to watch instead?



Movie of the week

This movie is adapted from a popular novel of the same name. While it drops many classic scenes and loses the romantic atmosphere of its parent, *The Time Traveler's Wife* is still a movie worth watching.

Rachel McAdams and Eric Bana lead in this PG-13 film by director Robert Schwentke. The script is written by Bruce Joel Rubin, back from his Oscar-winning script *Ghost* in 1990 and eager to cash in on another tale of a dewy-eyed damsel in love with a man who is not there.

But Clare seems incredibly disinterested in where Henry's "chrono-impairment" takes him. Such is this movie.

Synopsis

Clare has been in love with Henry her entire life. She believes they are destined to be together – even though she never knows when they will be separated.

You see, Henry is a time traveler: one cursed with a rare genetic anomaly that causes him to live his life on a shifting timeline, skipping back and forth with no control.

Even though Henry's travels force them apart with no warning, Clare desperately tries to build a life with her one true love.

The Time Traveler's Wife

(2009)



Scene 1

(Henry meets Clare for the first time. But it is not her first time meeting him.)

Henry (H): Can I help you?

Clare (C): Henry.

H: Yes?

C: Henry, it's you! You told me this would happen. I am supposed to act normal, but I'm not really acting very normal.

H: I am sorry, I really have no idea who you are.

C: I am Clare, Clare Abshire. Now I know ... I know you don't know me. Look, I know how odd this must be for you. It's odd for me. But, um ... Would you like to have dinner with me? And I will explain. Henry, we have been planning for this dinner for a long time.

H: We have?

C: We go to the Beau Thai, it's your favorite.

H: It is.

C: You look like you've been having a hard time. You know, everything is gonna be OK. So, um ... is it yes then, to dinner?

H: OK.

C: OK.

H: OK, yeah.

C: Yeah. So, Beau Thai, 7.

Scene 2

(Henry visits his father Richard.)

H: Dad?

Richard (R): What are you doing here?

H: I was worried. I called you several times.

R: I've been ill.

H: Yeah. I called the Orchestra. They told me you've been on a sick leave (1) since September.

R: August.

(Richard looks at his shaking hand.)

R: Makes it hard to play the violin.

(He pours a glass of whiskey.)

H: That's not gonna help.

C: Sure it does. Want one?

H: No, I don't drink anymore.

R: Pity. It was our one shared enthusiasm.

H: The first thing we've gotta do is to get someone in here to clean the place up. Make you some meals. I mean, do you even eat? I mean, do you want me to come around more often, take you to the doctor. Help pay some bills or what ...

R: No.

H: No? No to what? Everything or just some of that?

R: Get your own life in order (2) before you start telling me how to live mine.

H: I'm getting married.

R: Who would marry you? Does she know about ...

H: She knows everything about me.

Everything. Her name's Clare. Clare Abshire. She's an artist. And I'd really like to give her mom's wedding and engagement rings. That's why I am here and I think mom would really like that.

R: How would you know what your mother would like? You barely knew her.

H: I knew her. I still know her now. I've just seen her in the subway. I've seen her pushing me in a stroller (3). You know I've seen her with you too. This thing that I have isn't always a curse.

R: Then why don't you keep her from getting into that god damn car?

H: I would if I could, you know that. I've watched her die hundreds of times. I can never get there in time to change it.

(Richard gives Henry the rings.)

R: I still miss her. I miss her everyday.

H: So do I.

Scene 3

(Henry knows he is going to die at the Christmas party. He asks Gomez, a friend of his and Clare's, for a word.)

Gomez (G): What's up?

H: Just wanted to say thanks for everything, man. You've been a great friend.

G: What are you talking about?

H: Something might happen tonight. Alright? It's one leg, you know. I know I've been a pain in the ass (4), but you've been great. It's all been great.

G: Don't mention it.

C: Guys, are you crazy? It's freezing. Baby, put this on.

H: Gomez, this ... This is just man and man.

(Clare knows what is going to happen.)

C: Henry ... No .. No ...

H: Come here. Come on.

C: Why did you let me invite all these people?

H: I didn't want you to be alone.

C: I wouldn't change anything. I would not give up one second of our life together.

Vocabulary

1. sick leave: paid absence from work allowed in times of illness

2. in order: a state of proper arrangement

3. stroller: a light, chair-like carriage with wheels for transporting small children

4. pain in the ass: something or someone that causes trouble

(By Wang Yu)